



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

Slaw 4341.18.411

Bound
JAN 18 1899

THE SLAVIC COLLECTION



Harvard College Library

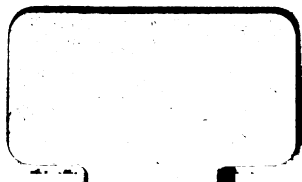
GIFT OF

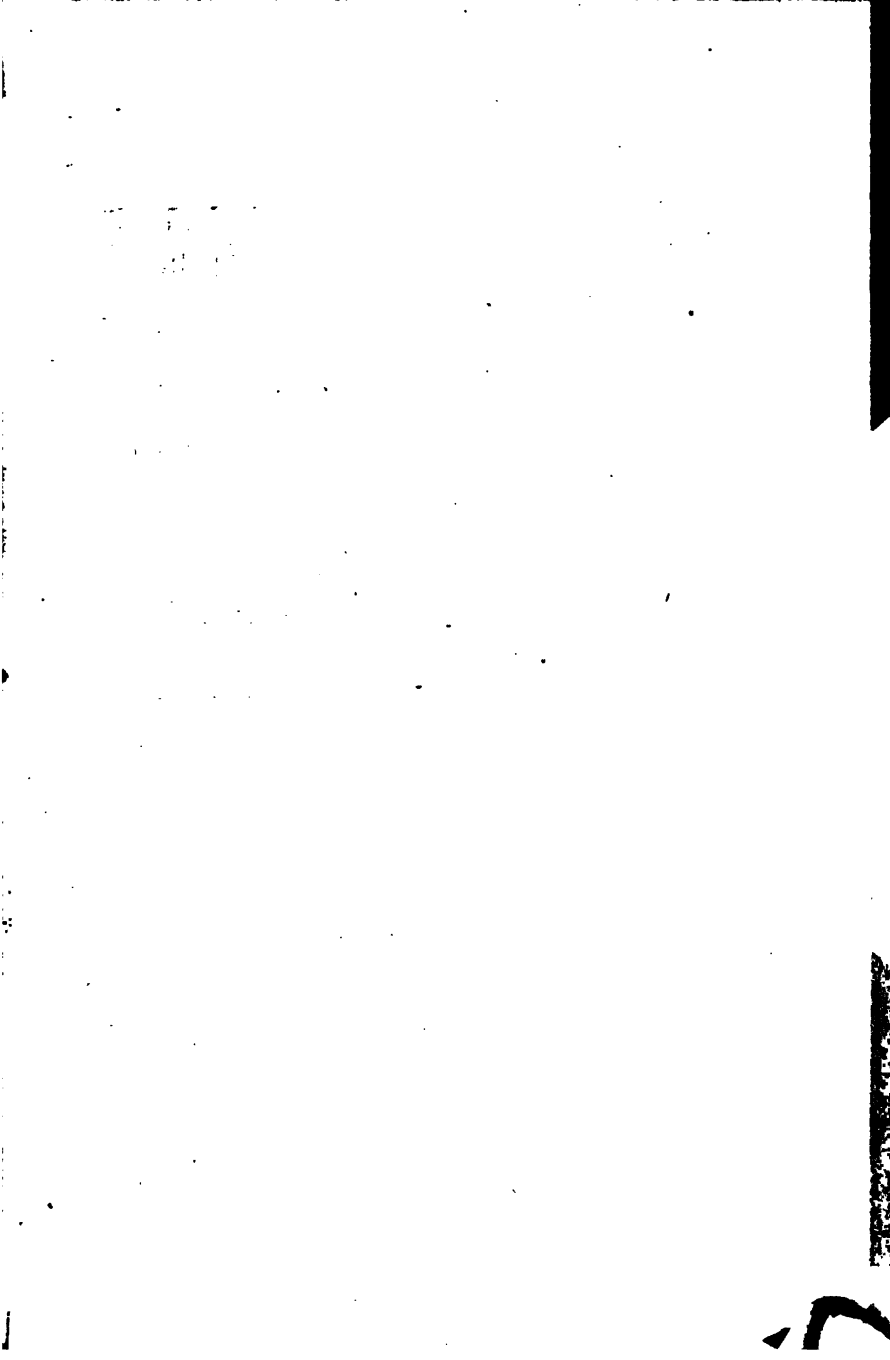
Archibald Cary Coolidge, Ph.D.

(Class of 1887.)

Received ~~July, 1895.~~

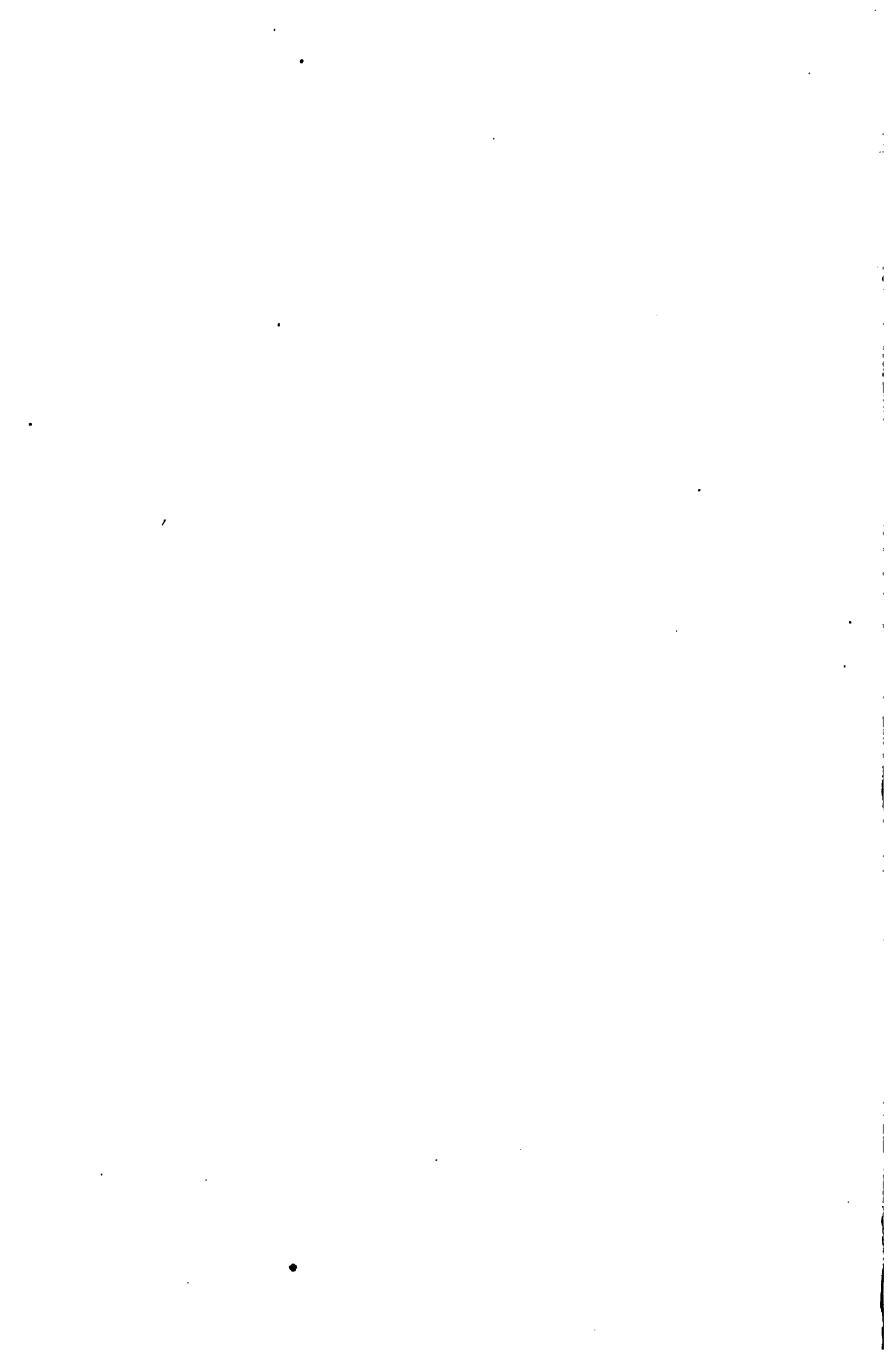
- 15 Nov. 1898





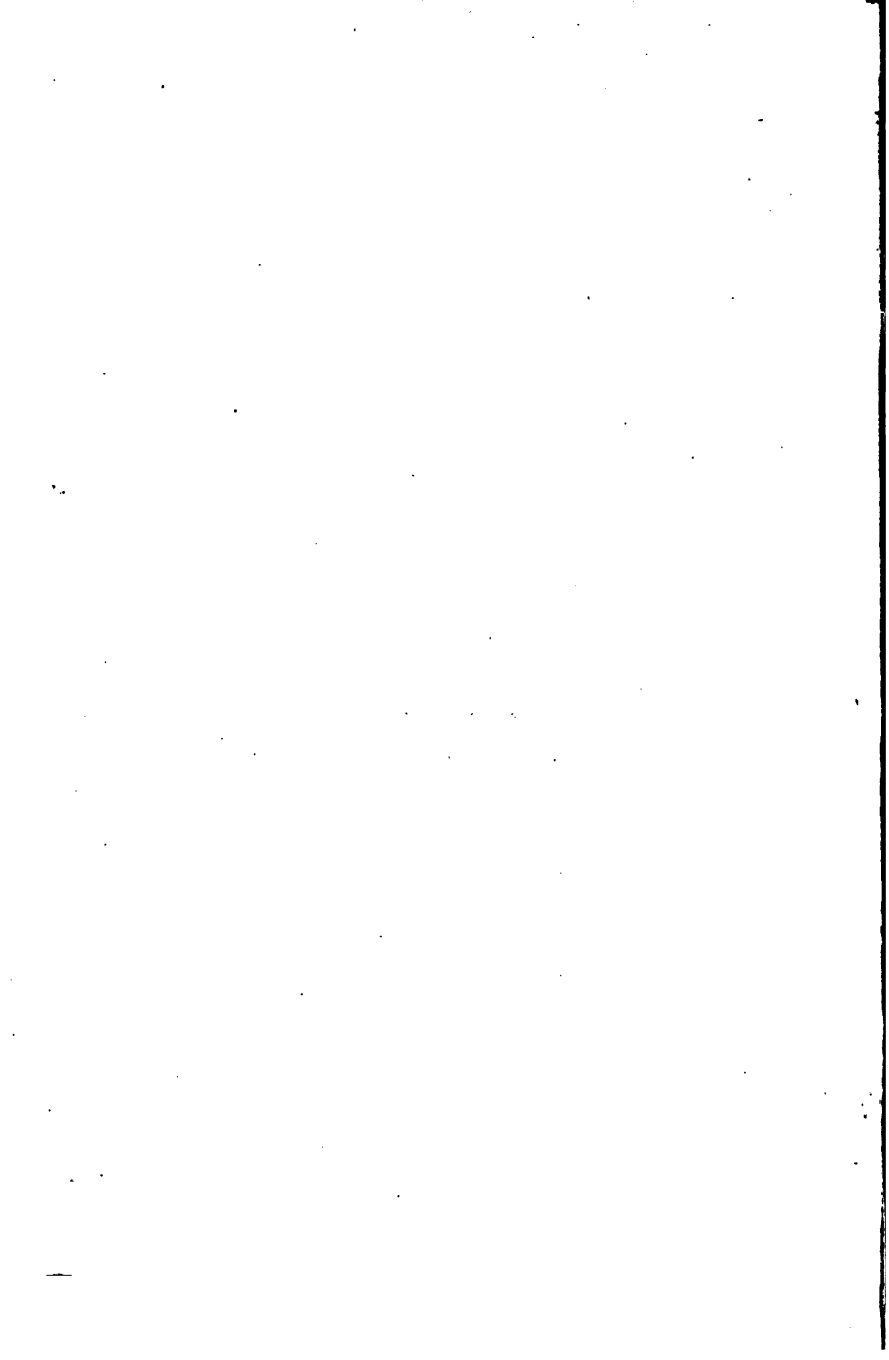






NADIA;

OR, OUT OF THE BEATEN TRACK.



NADIA;

OR,

OUT OF THE BEATEN TRACK.

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN OF

R. ORLOFFSKY,

BY THE BARONESS LANGENAU.

~~London (Antarctica) Calcutta.~~



VOL. I.

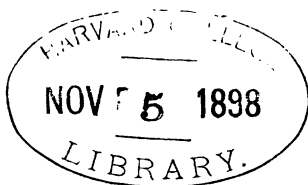
London :

SWAN SONNENSCHN, LOWREY & CO.,
PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

1888.

Slav 4341.18.411
~~Slav 4349.2.411~~

831 $\frac{43}{3}$



Mrs. J. R. Corbridge
(3 vols.)

BUTLER & TANNER,
THE SELWOOD PRINTING WORKS,
FROME, AND LONDON.

N A D I A ;

OR,

Out of the Beaten Track.

CHAPTER I.

IN one of the southern provinces of Russia, about five versts from the Volga and ten from the district town of C—, lies a large village named Biälastolby.¹ Like most of these black-earth villages, it was situated on the ground of a large hollow, and its low-walled, thatched houses were scattered on one of its sloping sides. It would be rather difficult to say how it came by its strange name. Old people asserted that some seventy or eighty years ago, one of its former possessors, whom a most benevolent ukase of the Emperor Paul had condemned to an eternal residence on his estate, had had the fancy to enclose the large manor house with high walls of sandstone, and to place as gateway two white stone pillars at the very beginning of a long avenue of old lime-trees, which led directly up to the house. But of all those memorials of lordly power, there re-

¹ White pillars.

mained not the slightest trace now-a-days, and even the family of the former proprietor had utterly disappeared, as people only disappear in Russia. The avenue of lime-trees, strongly damaged by the inexorable hand of time, still led from the village to the manor house, but the approach to it was free on all sides. The stately old house seemed to keep a cheerful and vigilant watch over the silent steppe; from the high place on which it was built, the eye roamed freely over the broad expanse of fields, softly blending with the tints of the far-off horizon, over the village on the opposite side of the river and the broad dike with which it was dammed up. These surroundings were certainly very plain; yet, when the cloudless June sky looked lovingly down upon the green and waving sea of corn, almost as boundless as the sky itself, or when the rays of the evening sun played on the cross and the windows of the village church, gilding the heights of the slumbering dike, it was hardly possible to avoid falling in love with this colourless landscape; it breathed such a wonderful peace, such an innate power, this silent steppe!

It was only on one side, behind the house, where the old garden sloped down to the embankment, that the landscape was set in a frame of thick verdure. Ancestral, wrinkled lime-trees, slender young poplars, and curly elms enclosed here with their many-coloured leaves a perfectly different and strange world. From the terrace, which faced the

garden, it looked much like a green wilderness, in which the farther the eye tried to dive, the more impenetrable the darkness grew, as if wanting to hide the entrance into it with impervious walls. Every notion of a possible broad and vast expanse like the steppe disappeared here; the eye lost itself in the depths of a shade, hardly ever lighted up by a stray sun-ray. Yet it was worth while penetrating into this wilderness, if only to experience a new feeling after the overwhelming uniformity of the steppe. The garden soon merged into the wood, the declivity got steeper and steeper, suddenly sweeping down into an almost perpendicular ravine, out of the depths of which a small river, after having worked itself out from under the embankment, continued its way sturdily on towards the Volga. But it was not very quiet, this little river, the shores of which lowered themselves down into the hollow, where they began to narrow and darken, being thickly covered with moorgrass and burdocks, mixed with crawling, catching shrubs. The river itself was foaming and roaring, dashing quickly over its stony bed; around it rose, like a secular guardian, the silent and gloomy-looking trees of the still untouched oak forest.

Białastolby had belonged for about forty years to Anna Grigorievna Koretzky. She had spent her childhood there, and it had been given to her as a dowry when she was married, at nineteen years of

age, to Alexis Nicolaievitch Koretzky, an officer of the life guard, who happened once to spend a few days in the district town of C——. Here she had brought up her two sons, Dmitry and Volodia ; and when she had found herself a widow in the year 1863, eleven years ago, she resolved to stay on and to keep the reins of government with as steady a hand as during the life of her husband. It was with a smile of proud satisfaction that she told whoever would hear it, that the 5,000 deciatines belonging to her now yielded twice as much as formerly during serfage time, and that her estate had never been encumbered nor her trees cut down. Her household was in perfect order, without being famous either for luxury or waste, and the massive healthy buildings on her estate were proofs of her being an excellent manager, in spite of her disliking and avoiding the introduction of all sorts of modern improvements. She enjoyed the respect of all her neighbours, though she was neither cultured nor intellectual ; and her house, though far from being one of the first of the district, was never empty, the high officials considering it their duty to keep up their relations with her, however little she seemed to care for their good graces.

The Koretzkys were descended from a Polish family of the same name, but having lived for many years in Russia, they had lost sight of all their former relations, and even dropped the title of prince. They were very poor, and had never been able to reach

high charges or distinctions, though they always strove to serve in the most conspicuous regiments and ministries. Such was the late husband of Anne Grigorievna, Alexis Nicolaievitch. When fate brought him inadvertently to the town of C—, and there took him to a ball at the governor's house, where he saw the pretty heiress, Anna Skvorzoff, who quickly lost her heart to him, he at once set about weighing the question whether it would be the right thing for him to offer his hand and heart to this provincial girl, who was a perfect stranger in his own brilliant world of Petersburg. The practical side of the question soon conquered the vanity of the young officer ; he married the handsome heiress, and even left service, according to her father's wishes. But rural farming did not suit him ; he felt dull in the society of his pretty but country-bred wife, and vanity left him no peace, the more so as his brother, Peter Nicolaievitch, having also contrived to make a brilliant match, held open house in Petersburg, and was quickly advancing on the road to honours and distinctions. He could not stand his dull life any longer, and re-entered active service. His wife followed him with a heavy heart, but every summer she returned to her own Biälastolby, even when her husband did not accompany her. She did not thrive in the great world of the capital, and was moreover not on the very best terms with her husband ; her practical eye detected all his faults, and she felt ashamed at his

paltry self-love, while *he* could not forgive her for not having turned out a fashionable lady. Thus some years passed slowly on. Anna Grigorievna hardened and shrivelled up in the narrow round of her practical duties, and hearty though somewhat trivial benevolence. Her husband had already reached the rank of a general, but when the Eastern war broke out, he was left behind, as only fit for Sunday parades, and this disgrace slowly undermined his health. In the meantime, both his sons were growing up; the elder, Dmitry, was sent to the University at Moscow, just when the emancipation of the peasants took place, while the other was kept at home, being still a child. Both children were, as is often seen, more devoted to their mother than to their father; and this was a great boon for Dmitry, for having lived exclusively under her quieting influence, he did not carry away from his paternal home those exciting impressions which penetrate into young hearts like corrosive leaven, and put them into ebullition. But now the memorable day of the 19th of February was drawing near, and Alexis Nicolaievitch resolved to go down into the country, and convince himself that the end had indeed come of that lordly power which he had only enjoyed in imagination. The first visit of the new justice of peace at Biälastolby seemed unbearable to him. He tried first to treat him in a soldierly, off-hand way, but he soon began to stammer, got confused, and at last submitted to the repre-

sentative of the new era. Yet he thought this new order of things perfectly odious, and became a prey to a morbid excitement, the fatal forerunner of his death. Unfortunately another calamity befell him. During a review something went wrong in that part of the regiment which he commanded, and he was fated to hear some very ungracious words from His Majesty's lips. His health began to fail, yet he lingered on for another year. One day, after a very good dinner, his earthly career came to a sudden close. Thus another colourless existence passed away into darkness, and its sun sank down behind greyish clouds unperceived by any one, to be seen no more !

After his death, Anna Grigorievna resolved to stay the whole year round in the country ; she accepted little by little the new order of things, and turned into the busy, good-natured housewife, who is now to be introduced to the reader. She never made the slightest effort to get out of the narrow frame in which her life was set, and devoted herself exclusively to the management of her estate and to the education of her children, of whom she was passionately fond, though it never entered her head to take a leading part in the development of their minds. She never clearly understood what passed in their young heads, just as she never tried to fathom the new phenomena of social life. She only sometimes shook her head with a startled look, when some especially sharp and lively word of theirs struck her ear ; she did not

like the new spirit of the age which met her on all sides, but she never thought of struggling against it.

At the moment when our story begins, her elder son was travelling abroad; the younger, who had finished his studies at the University of Odessa the preceding year, had just returned from a visit to Petersburg. Anna Grigorievna herself had not been home for more than three weeks, having gone to Moscow on some important business,—a rare event in her quiet life. When she returned to Biälastolby, bringing with her a young girl, a distant relation of hers, her own household and her neighbours were equally startled. No one had ever heard of her existence, and her sudden apparition in this peaceful little corner of the world seemed to awaken as much distrust as wonder. Anna Grigorievna had not thought fit to explain her reasons for bringing her niece, Nadia Olsheffsky, to live with her, and this reticence had perhaps contributed to throw a mysterious halo round the young girl.

The fact was that she had received, two months ago, a long letter from Nadia's father, Sergius Olsheffsky, asking her to take some interest in his daughters' fate, their mother having been a cousin of Anna Grigorievna. She started at once for Moscow, where the young girls were supposed to live. She sought them long and vainly at Bialakammenny.¹ The eldest, Alexandra, had left town some time ago,

¹ A part of the town of Moscow.

and the youngest was only found by the merest chance. Once, on returning to her hotel, after a fruitless search, she saw a young girl rush downstairs past her. Their eyes met, and they recognised each other immediately, though the old lady had only seen her niece once, years ago. Nadia tried at first to conceal herself from her aunt, and it was long before Anna Grigorievna got her to consent to accompany her back into the country. Neither caresses nor persuasion seemed to have any influence over her; but the straightforward sympathy of her aunt conquered her stubbornness at last, and she confided her hopeless position to her. The distrust she had shown at first disappeared entirely, and her whole being seemed to revive and unfold under the tender and soothing influence of her new mode of life. Anna Grigorievna resolved to take her back with her to Biälastolby; but as she was a minor, there were many long and tedious formalities to be gone through before the old lady was at last appointed her guardian.

CHAPTER II.

IT was a perfect, cloudless, somewhat fresh morning in the beginning of April. The evening before, a violent thunderstorm, with heavy rain-showers, had come down over the manor house, one of those rare spring thunderstorms with which summer sometimes announces its approach. Some remaining rain-drops were still glittering on the leaves of the trees; the lawns, saturated with dampness, were already verduring, as if nature was in a hurry to prove the fulness of its re-awakening power. Even the gloomy oaks, always meeting spring with open distrust, showed signs of swelling buds; the lilacs did not yet think of blossoming, but the air was pregnant with the aromatic perfume of the budding water-elders.

A tall young man, his gun slung over his shoulder, was lingering on the footpath which led from the wood into the garden. He was dressed in a light grey jacket, and though covered with mud from head to foot, there was something elegant in his whole appearance. He was twenty-two years of age, but looked much younger; his light, somewhat bashful gait, his brilliant, restless eyes, and soft, handsome

features, gave something childlike to his whole person. Having reached the lawn before the house, he threw himself down upon a bench, drew his silver mouthpiece out of his pocket, and lighted his cigar. A sort of graceful laziness pervaded his whole position. His black setter laid down at his feet, gazing lovingly up at his master with his pensive, beaming eyes.

The young man looked at his watch.

"Not yet nine o'clock! more than half an hour till breakfast-time!" he exclaimed, drawing a small, ruffled book out of his pocket. But he had hardly opened it, when he heard the creaking of a wicket-door and saw a lady's dress appear behind the bushes. The dog started up with a joyous bark, and the young man sprang to his feet.

"Nadia! where have you been at such an early hour?" he eagerly asked of the young girl, as she drew nearer, while his eyes flashed and a slight flush mounted to his brow.

"I have been to the village," she said, in a low, sweet voice, holding out her hand to him; "there are many sick people there."

Nadia Olsheffsky had just completed her eighteenth year, but to judge from the expression of her softly rounded lips, especially when a smile parted them, she could hardly be more than a child. Yet this impression was strongly contradicted by the fire of her large grey eyes and the straight line of her black eyebrows. These eyes sometimes stared so

hard, looking out of such unfathomable depths, that the thoughts which were veiled behind them could scarcely be those of a child. It was easy to see that her small and lovely head had pondered upon grave and weighty questions, and that life had set its gloomy seal on her pure and broad forehead. She was dressed in a plain grey frock, fastened round her slender waist by a leathern girdle; a light cloth jacket was thrown over her shoulders, and the soft thick curls of her fair hair were falling down her back, escaping out of the white kerchief which she had tied round her head.

"Well, you too must have been up early this morning, Volodia," she cried gaily, "at least to judge from this," she added, drawing nearer the bench and pointing to the game-bag, out of which four ducks were visible.

Volodia seemed a little abashed.

"I could not resist, Nadia, you know. I was always the first to have a peep at the marsh in spring——"

"Why excuse yourself?" she cried, laughing. "Shooting is a very healthy occupation, and particularly useful to you, as it helps you to conquer your Petersburgian laziness. What a lovely day, eh?"

She sat down, looking up at him with a sweet archness.

"Volodia, why do you always fancy you are particularly bound to be a model young man, devoting yourself exclusively to grave and important ques-

tions? Live according to your taste, and not to definite rules laid down beforehand by others!"

There was a strange ring of contempt in her voice; she seemed almost to treat him as grown-up people treat children, and yet she was almost five years his junior.

On hearing this, Volodia flushed still more.

"Why are you always laughing at me, Nadia?" he said hesitatingly. "You treat me as if I were a silly boy, unable to understand the high and important questions of our age, and yet I assure you that I am ready to devote my whole life to the service of mankind."

"You would do much better to help your mother in managing her farm; she is old, and you might——"

"Why do you always interrupt me when I want to talk to you of those important questions?" he cried, and his eyes flashed and his cheeks glowed; "yet I know all about your past life, and belong to your own party."

She raised her eyes and fastened them on his with a cold, almost hostile expression.

"Never talk to me in this way, Volodia," she said harshly; "can you really not understand?" Her voice suddenly changed, and she went on in a hardly audible whisper,—

"Allow me to forget my past; give me time to get accustomed to all these new surroundings. Do you really fancy this is so very easy?"

But she had now mastered her emotion, and added, in a quiet, almost gay tone, as she laid her hand on the ruffled little book which Volodia had thrown on the bench, "Let me see what novel you were reading just now."

"It is no novel ; only the speech of Lassalle at the workmen's meeting at Berlin."

"Well, I see you are really bent on not losing a single moment of your day. It is praiseworthy, indeed it is !"

Volodia again began to defend his favourite question, but she continued without listening to him,—

"If that's your wish, after all, you'll only have to look closely into what's going on in your own village. There will be opportunities enough to study the question here in your nearest vicinity. Did you ever go the village ?"

"Of course I did !"

"But you never went into one of the peasant's huts, I dare say, did you ?"

Volodia remained silent.

"Well, you see, this is not such an abstract work as reading Lassalle. There are sick children, dirt, and suffocation ! There is nothing alluring in it, I confess, though I am neither lazy nor afraid of work."

"Why do you go there almost daily ?" cried the young man eagerly, fastening his brilliant black eyes on her lovely face. "You must know that you risk

catching all sorts of illnesses in this way, and all this only because you want to try the efficacy of your homœopathic medicines!"

Nadia shook her head.

"My best thanks for your interest in my welfare, yet I'll go on with my work in spite of it. Why do I go there? Because I want to study the habits of that common people about whom you and your likes talk so much!"

"Very well, Nadia; but as you are neither a doctor, nor a professor of socialism, this is no business of yours, I think."

An eager expression stole over Nadia's face. Some deep emotion, long kept down, seemed to be rising once more to the surface.

"You mean to say, I suppose, that these are no proper doings for young ladies," she said ironically; "but remember, I am not setting up for the proper young lady. Besides, I know a great deal; for instance, that your peasants live twice as badly now as they did during serfage, though we are so very hard upon those old times. Those who had three horses and as many cows formerly, have only one now, some even less, while other better-off peasants are obliged to labour now just as much as they did then. In this country, where wheat grows in such abundance, they have even lost the remembrance of white bread."

"Enough!" cried Volodia. "How can you talk

so? Do you really mean to say they were happier under the yoke of slavery? Perhaps liberty is——”

“Oh! for those high words, ‘yoke of slavery, liberty!’ The fact is that you radical gentlemen are always ready to listen to all sorts of rhapsodies, but always unwilling to go into details. But enough of this, Volodia,” she added, on seeing that he was no longer listening to her words, but fastening his eyes on her face with an intense look of admiration; “you do not listen to me any more, I see. You want the sweets of life, just as a flower the sun. Go and enjoy them as long as they last! You are a nice young man; life to you is but a long holiday; go! flirt, drink, dance, and shoot, but throw away Lassalle; what can he be to you?”

At this moment the old butler, Terenty, appeared on the terrace. He had spent his whole life at Biälastolby, and had served his master with that devotion which distinguishes old-fashioned servants.

“Tea is ready; the Barina¹ sends for you!” he said, drawing near to the young people; and turning his beardless face, as yellow as wax, towards Nadia, he fixed his eyes with a severe, upbraiding look on her.

“Well, go and join your mother, Volodia; I’ll go and change my dress, in order to take up my part of well-behaved young lady,” said Nadia.

Volodia remained as if in a trance, his bewitched

¹ My lady.

and motionless eyes gazing at her retreating grey dress. At last he started up with a deep sigh, and not deeming it necessary to change his dress, walked off towards the house; while Terenty, remaining at a respectful distance, gazed a little scoffingly at his pensive face.

"Shall I take these things up to the house?" he asked, pointing to the gun and the game-bag, which Volodia had forgotten, on the bench.

"Oh! these young people," he murmured, while following Volodia up to the house. "Our young gentleman seems to have fallen most irretrievably in love with this bird of passage—may God forgive her! And she, such a nobody; strolls about in the morning visiting the sick in the village, smokes cigarettes, and talks, by Jove, as if she were a boy and not a girl! And she wants to be considered a lady!"

so? Do you really mean to say they were happier under the yoke of slavery? Perhaps liberty is——"

"Oh! for those high words, 'yoke of slavery, liberty!' The fact is that you radical gentlemen are always ready to listen to all sorts of rhapsodies, but always unwilling to go into details. But enough of this, Volodia," she added, on seeing that he was no longer listening to her words, but fastening his eyes on her face with an intense look of admiration; "you do not listen to me any more, I You want the sweets of life, just as a flower the Go and enjoy them as long as they last! You will enjoy young man; life to you is but a long Lassalle; what can he be to you?"

At this moment the old butler, Terenty on the terrace. He had spent his whole life with the family, and had served his master with which distinguishes old-fashioned servants.

"Tea is ready; the Barina¹ sends word, drawing near to the young people, that his beardless face, as yellow as wax, fixed his eyes with a severe, steady gaze.

"Well, go and join your mother, and change my dress, in order to receive the young lady," said the butler. Volodia remained

and motionless eyes staring at her retreating grey dress. At last he started up with a deep sigh, and not deeming it necessary to change his dress, walked off towards the house, while Volodia, maintaining at a respectful distance, gave a last scrutiny of her pensive face.

"Shall I tell you something?" he asked, pointing to the girl who, Volodia had forgotten to mention.

"Oh! these young people are following Volodia to the end. A gentleman seems to have fallen in love with this bird of passage. And she, such a nobody, strong when visiting the sick in the winter, and talks, by Jove, as if she were a girl! And she wants to be considered

CHAPTER III.

VOLODIA found his mother at her usual place behind the samovar. She sat down to tea every day at nine o'clock, and wanted her whole household to be as punctual as she was. She always wore a cinnamon-coloured morning gown and an old-fashioned cap ; but this unbecoming attire looked as clean and fresh as she did herself. An expression of quietness and good nature was stamped on her wrinkled but still handsome face. Her imposing carriage and dignified movements seemed to imply that she felt herself omnipotent in her family circle, and expected no one ever to contradict her.

Volodia bent down over her hand—a wonderfully white and soft hand it was—after which she took hold of his head and pressed her lips on his forehead. Since his earliest childhood he had been so accustomed to give her this proof of reverence when they met in the morning, that he never thought of exchanging this old-fashioned habit of greeting for a more modern one.

“Volodia ! my goodness, how do you look !” she exclaimed, on perceiving his high boots, all splashed

with mud. "How do you dare to come to me in such a state?"

"I have just returned home, mamma," he said, trying to excuse himself. "I've been out on a duck chase since five o'clock in the morning."

"But then you must be ravenously hungry, poor dear! Well, come and have your cup of tea; you can change your dress afterwards."

To Anna Grigorievna, who was passionately fond of tidiness, this was no small concession.

"Have you told Nadia Olsheffsky that breakfast is ready?" she asked sharply of the butler, who had appeared between the folding doors.

"Nadeshda Sergeievna was in the garden with Vladimir Alexandrovitch," he answered; and his face expressed a dumb though deep dissatisfaction with the young girl. "She knows it. I saw her going upstairs, I suppose to change her dress, for she has been down in the village since dawn."

This small bit of information was delivered with a very innocent air, though Terenty very well knew that his mistress disliked these early walks of Nadia's as much as her great partiality for the peasants' children.

"Have you again quarrelled with your cousin?" asked the old lady of her son, as soon as Terenty had left the room.

"Yes," he answered curtly, with a gloomy look.

Anna Grigorievna shook her head sadly.

"Why can't you agree with her, Volodia? Why won't you understand that this poor girl, in fact an orphan, though her father is alive, thrown among strangers as she is, ought to be won over with love and tenderness? It is always hard to live among strangers, but for her it must be twice so, after the unlimited liberty she had in her father's house and in Moscow. We must do our best to make her forget the past, and to get her to love us; while you, on the contrary, do all you can to tease her. This is wrong, indeed it is, my boy."

Volodia did not answer, but gazed gloomily at his tea-cup. It was not the first time that he had had to hear this. Oh! how little did Anna Grigorievna guess at the true state of her son's feelings, and at the true reason of his quarrels with Nadia.

"We must bear with her," continued his mother; "she sometimes looks like a little tiger, but her heart is true and good, and that's the chief thing."

"Why won't you tell me how you found her in Moscow, and what happened with her there?" suddenly asked Volodia, raising his flushed face towards his mother.

"This is no business of yours; I have told you so a hundred times. Take care never to broach this subject to her, I warn you."

Volodia's answer died on his lips, for Nadia just then entered the room. She had changed her frock for a plain dark-blue dress, that suited her faultless

figure to perfection. Her wavy hair was imprisoned in a silk net—in a word, her whole appearance was exactly like that of a hundred other well-bred and modest provincial girls, with the only exception that her eyes looked in a very imperious way at the surrounding world, in which she herself occupied such an infinitely small place.

Nadia walked up to her aunt with her usual quiet and dignified bearing ; but instead of holding out her hand for her to kiss, Anna Grigorievna took hold of her head, and gave her a mother's hearty kiss. At the same time, giving way to her inveterate love of order, she straightened some of the rebellious curls which had escaped the net, and said in a half joking, half anxious tone,—

“How careless you are, child ; I daresay you have again been out without your hat, you look so flushed ; and yet you know how treacherous the April sun is ! How I hate those walks of yours to the village !”

In spite of the good-natured way in which these words were uttered, a rebellious feeling of independence rose within Nadia's heart ; she threw her head proudly back, and it was with a provoking movement that she dropped her aunt's hand. She looked at this moment like a young untutored horse, impatiently suffering the bridle, and unwillingly submitting to the offered caresses. But Anna Grigorievna did not observe this, and went on in her usual soft way, upbraiding her for her frequent visits to the

peasants' isbas.¹ More than one passionate word rose to Nadia's lips, but they were kept down with a strong hand, and nothing betrayed her emotion but a scarlet flush, which rose to her brow, and a sudden frowning of her eyebrows.

"Our people here are coarse, and don't value your kindness," continued the old lady. "You don't observe it, because they are outwardly quiet and doff their caps to you; but only try and forget yourself, and treat them like equals, and they will look down upon you."

Volodia, who had not said a word since Nadia entered the room, now resolved to interfere. He saw what efforts it cost her to keep her tongue, and wishing to come to her aid, he thought that he would at the same time startle her with his liberal views.

"How is it possible to have such old-fashioned ideas, mamma?" he exclaimed. "Why do you say 'the people' when you talk of our peasants?"—for one short moment he hesitated whether he ought not to have said "indwellers of villages" instead of peasants—"as if we did not also belong to the people, as if they were not also fully entitled to share the benefit of our culture. It is only through a benevolent and natural intercourse with them that we shall ever be able to conquer their well-deserved distrust, I fancy."

Having delivered this speech Volodia looked at his

¹ Huts.

cousin with a well-satisfied air. But the expected impression of his words did not come. Anna Grigorievna smiled somewhat condescendingly and said,—

“I have lived forty years of my life among our peasants, my dear, while you only know them by hearsay; so I suppose I can judge them better than you can, though I can’t talk as cleverly as you.”

“In what papers did you find these liberal phrases?” cried Nadia, with a mocking smile. “You seem to look upon our peasants as on stuffed figures, and interest yourself about them at a respectful distance. Those are new-fashioned ideas, and very convenient, I confess.”

A sarcastic answer rose to Volodia’s lips, but at this moment the butler re-entered the room with a letter on a tray.

“From abroad,” he said, handing it to Volodia.

“From Mitia!” the young man exclaimed, tearing open the envelope.

“The village starost¹ has come, and wishes to speak to your excellency,” said Terenty, turning to Anna Grigorievna.

“Tell him to wait outside.”

“He seems to have been sent here by the peasants on a most important errand; it is something about the land, he says.”

“I know. Tell him to wait, and send for Jacob.”

¹ Bailiff, overseer.

A slight flush covered Nadia's cheeks, her brows contracted, and she seemed ready to say some sharp words, but she kept them back. She knew in what consisted the business "about the land" which the peasants wanted to talk about.

"Jacob Savelitch is also waiting outside," said the butler, as he left the room.

"What does Mitia write?" asked Anna Grigorievna of her son.

"He is coming home, and very, very soon! in fact, almost immediately! But please let me first finish; I have not read half of it yet."

Volodia devoured his brother's letter, interrupting his reading from time to time with laughter and exclamations. It was easy to see that he was mightily interested in what he read, and in high spirits, as the English say.

"He has finished his business at Hohenheim," incoherently related Volodia; "he is now going for a fortnight to see a friend of his in Bohemia."

"And when does he come?" asked his mother.

"He will be here in three weeks' time, about the beginning of next month, as I told you. He is very satisfied with all he saw abroad, has left service, and intends to settle down here."

"What? left service?"

"Well, you know that Uncle Peter Nicolaievitch wrote to him that a real State councillor, with many orders, ought not to wander idly about Europe for

more than two years—so his excellency deigned to express himself. Only fancy saying this to Mitia : to idle about ! ”

“ Please to express yourself more clearly, Volodia,” said his mother, somewhat impatiently.

“ That he was spoiling his career, and that even he, the excellency uncle, would not be able to give him his co-operation, as he says according to chancellery style. But Mitia answered him that he did not want his help ; for he was going to settle down at Biälä-stolby to devote himself to the Zemstvo. What a good fellow he is ! And then he left service.”

Anna Grigorievna, however, did not fully partake of her son's rapture. She was of course delighted to see her beloved Mitia, whom she thought clever as few, settling down with her in the country ; but, on the other side, she did not approve of his giving up a career which had promised to be very brilliant under the patronage of his uncle, whom she, however, detested cordially. But she kept these observations to herself, and remained silent, looking very pensive.

“ Well, that's his own affair,” she mentally ejaculated, having long been accustomed to rely on her eldest son's judgment ; “ he must best know what to do. Give me your brother's letter, Volodia,” she said aloud.

Nadia had finished her tea during this colloquy. Now drawing a cigarette out of a small silver box, she began to smoke, though she knew very well that her

aunt disliked it; but wanting especially now to vex her, she did not think it necessary to mind her caprices, as she called them. Anna Grigorievna raised her eyes, gazed intently at her niece, and then, without saying a word, turned away from her and took up her letter. She had made a rule never to interfere with Nadia, hoping thus to soften her rebellious character. And in fact, the young girl soon threw away her cigarette, though the expression of her face said distinctly that she rebelled against this sacrifice of her own wishes to those of another person.

"I am very glad to think you will soon know my brother," said Volodia, turning towards her. "You'll find a worthy antagonist in him whenever you want to quarrel, and you will be unable, at least, to accuse *him* of want of seriousness."

Volodia could not forget the words spoken by his cousin in the garden.

"Why do you insinuate that I am fond of quarrelling? I have not the slightest intention of teasing your clever brother with my uninteresting opinions, I assure you; they would only interfere with his more important affairs."

The hidden sarcasm of these words made Volodia start up in defence of his beloved brother, in spite of his deep love for Nadia.

"Don't talk in that scoffing tone, please, Nadia. Though my brother Dmitry and I are very alike in many things, yet I am obliged to confess that he has

a large stock of knowledge and an aptitude for work, very rare in a Russian gentleman."

Volodia delivered this speech with the importance of a man deeply convinced of the ripeness of his own youthful judgment; but in speaking thus he was perfectly unconscious of the highly bombastic tone which he always used to his cousin, and which did not fail to rouse her keen sense of ridicule.

"I do not doubt this, Vladimir Alexandrovitch; your brother's success in chemistry is as well known to me as yours in—Russian eloquence! Besides, he possesses a doctor's diploma, I am sure, and therefore I suppose that his present journey through the most picturesque parts of Europe will be of the greatest use to Russia in general, and to the peasantry of Biälastolby in particular . . ."

Here Anna Grigorievna thought fit to interfere.

"I don't know," she said coldly, putting aside Mitia's letter, "why you are so lavish with your praises of your brother. He does not want your help; besides, Biälastolby belongs to me, and not to him, as Nadia knows, I suppose."

Volodia felt exasperated with his cousin and with himself. He got up and walked over to the window shrugging his shoulders and whistling softly to himself; then turning suddenly round, he said in an abrupt tone, addressing his mother,—

"I am going upstairs on business. I must send off a letter to Neradovitch."

He pronounced this name in a subdued voice, as if everybody on hearing it ought to sink down on their knees. Strange to say, it made Nadia turn pale and fix her eyes with a startled look on his face.

"Of which Neradovitch do you talk?" she asked aghast.

"Of which? of course of him whom every student at the university of Odessa knows and worships as one of the most honourable and bravest of all leaders. I was happy enough to make his acquaintance. But you, Nadia, why do you feel any interest about him?"

"Do you really intend to write to this man?" she cried, with an increasing agitation.

"Certainly, if you allow of it," answered Volodia mockingly, affecting a superior air.

"But I tell you," she cried passionately, "that if you knew who this man is, you would not have anything to do with him. Let me warn you against him."

"You mean to say that Neradovitch is a red-hot republican, and therefore in disgrace with the catch-poles; is it not so? Oh, I have known this very long. Do you think this frightens me?"

"That does not matter, Volodia; but do you know that he may be arrested this very minute? and then it is not indifferent what letters are found in his desk."

Volodia started up.

"Very well," he exclaimed, "so you advise me to

forsake him in the hour of danger ! and to think that it is Nadia Olsheffsky, who belonged to his party not long ago, who talks thus ! Yes, I know all, Nadeshda Sergeevna, I know all ! Only tell me, please, where you got that other knowledge which you now offer me so gratuitously ? ”

The feeling of his offended dignity almost overcame the young man ; he wished to prove to Nadia the soundness and reality of these convictions, at which she had so often laughed in such an offensive way.

But now her patience was at an end. She had sacrificed her most cherished principles out of devotion to the family Koretzky, had almost turned informer ; and this was the way in which they thanked her for it ! A burning blush covered her cheeks. But it was not only with Volodia that she felt exasperated ; she could not forgive her aunt for sitting there so quietly, listening to their disputes, while she trembled inwardly for her son's safety. Safety ! this word flashing through her brain still heightened her contempt for these people. Why did *she* never reflect on her own safety ? All these thoughts crowded madly within her brain.

“ You remind me of what I was before I came to your house,” she exclaimed, “ and what I gave up for your sake, for your stupid prejudices and old-fashioned notions. Would to God I had never entered your family, for I ought to know that you

will never succeed in educating me, that I shall ever remain what I was before."

Anna Grigorievna gazed at her with a frightened look. She had remained silent hitherto, because she had felt vexed at the contemptuous tone in which Nadia had mentioned her beloved Mitia, but now she thought it time to interfere.

"What's the matter with you, Nadia? how dare you talk thus? Remember!" she exclaimed, with an alarmed look at her niece, drawing near to her.

She met with a quick, enraged glance.

"Why have you not spoken the whole truth long ago, auntie, and thrust me out of your house, and thus put a stop to your highly praised kindness to me? I know its full worth! no one ever loved me here, nor ever will! I knew it from the very day of my arrival. Why don't you simply order me away?"

Her words sounded more and more haughty and inimical.

Anna Grigorievna now began to quiet her, showering caresses and tender words upon her.

"Enough," sharply interrupted Nadia; "you can't deceive me, nor hold me back. I tell you that the sooner I leave your house the better it will be for you and me."

Having spoken those words, she left the room with a quick, decisive step, slamming the door after her. Volodia seemed thunderstruck. He remained staring at the door long after she had disappeared behind it.

He could not forgive himself for having wounded and exasperated with his stupid raillery the being he worshipped the most on earth, at whose feet he was ready to prostrate himself. . . . An overwhelming feeling of shame almost crushed him as he reflected that he alone was the cause of this violent outburst, that he had provoked her to utter this torrent of wicked words.

Anna Grigorievna sat down, reclining her grey head on her hand, and giving herself up to the sad thoughts that crowded within her brain.

"Yes," she said, "it is a hard task to conquer such a character ; yet, with God's help, I'll succeed."

She did not, however, give way to these depressing thoughts for long. She knew the full worth of time, and remembering that several persons were waiting for her, she walked out on the landing-place with her quick, firm step.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Anna Grigorievna appeared on the head of the staircase, she saw behind the village starost a small crowd of householders, who had been sent by the peasants to be present at the interview. They were all standing at some distance, but as soon as they saw her, they doffed their caps and drew slowly near to the house.

"What does this mean?" she asked severely, stopping on the top of the stairs. "How often have I told you, Trofim, that I will not talk with so many at one time? *You* were announced to me; with *you* I'll discuss this business; you are the village starost, after all."

Trofim Mironoff, a tall, square man, with a wooden face, in which a pair of quick, roguish eyes sparkled most strangely, was looking straight before him and turning his cap between his hands; he twinkled obliquely, and gazed at the peasants, as if seeking a support in them.

"They have been sent from the village community, matushka,* your excellency," he muttered hesitat-

* Little mother.

ingly, scratching his neck and heaving a deep sigh ;
“without them, we can’t do anything.”

“Where’s Jacob?” asked Anna Grigorievna, looking round her.

At this moment a small, black-haired man, dressed in a very tidy blue kaftan, started out of a corner of the house, as if detaching himself from the very wall. His beardless, oblong face was singularly hard and immovable ; it hardly seemed to belong to a human being, but to have been cast in an iron mould. His brows were firmly knit and his eyes obstinately bent down. This was the manor starost, a hard-working man, with strange, silent ways, who hardly ever had any intercourse with his neighbours.

“What do they want, Jacob?” she asked of him.

“Really, I don’t know,” he answered gloomily, without raising his eyes. “I was just going to put the question to them myself ; I suppose it is about the land.”

“Who can know if you don’t, Jacob Savelitch?” said Trofim, in an insinuating tone, turning his face towards him, his quick eyes roaming from Anna Grigorievna to the manor starost, and from him back again to the crowd of peasants.

Instead of answering, Jacob raised his left eyelid for one short moment, glanced scornfully aside, and remained silent.

“Well, say why did you come here?” impatiently exclaimed Anna Grigorievna.

"Now, my dears," said Trofim, "say why the village community sent you here to the Barina."

A confused murmur of voices arose in the yard.

"No ; only one at a time," Anna Grigorievna said severely, addressing the peasants. "Why on earth did they send us all these brawlers ? as if I could not have despatched the whole business with you alone," she continued, turning towards the village starost.

But Trofim remained stubbornly silent ; it was evident that he did not want to spoil his position with the lady of the manor-house, nor did he want to fall out with the peasants by leading the negotiations in a too conciliatory spirit.

At last two men stepped out of the crowd, their comrades pushing them on by their elbows, thinking this the best way to inspire them with the necessary courage.

"You have deeply offended us, Anna Grigorievna," said one of them, a very young man, shaking his dark curly hair ; "we stated this opinion to your starost, but he seems to have forgotten all about it. We shan't consent to do the autumnal sowings on the manor-land unless you give us our due part. Is it not so ?" he concluded, turning towards the peasants.

Jacob remained motionless, his brows firmly knit, as if these matters were quite foreign to him.

"Yes, yes, so it is," several voices answered.

"What," exclaimed Anna Grigorievna severely

and peremptorily, "you gave up your own land freely and fully, and now, when it **has** risen in price, you want me to make a gift of the poll-tax to you? I have already told you a hundred times that it can't be."

"But the ground belongs to us, we say. Our fathers and grandfathers ploughed it," said a tall, bearded young fellow, taking two steps forward. He spoke in a strange, high-pitched voice, which contrasted most oddly with his tall body.

"Trofim, why do you stand there like a blockhead, as if you had lost your tongue?" exclaimed Anna Grigorievna. "Why don't you tell them that they are talking nonsense? You know, I suppose, that the land does not belong to them because I allowed them to have it in usufruct?"

Trofim remained silent for a few moments, nervously twitching his hands.

"What shall I say?" he began, in a soft, insinuating voice. "Would they understand me? And then, to speak the truth, we have ourselves the greatest trouble with these beggarly parts. You know yourself, please, that the crops were very bad last year."

"The crops were not bad," interrupted the old lady. "If you won't begin with the autumnal sowings, they will undertake to do it at Nikolsky with the greatest pleasure. The land won't remain uncultivated, never fear."

Nikolsky was a large estate in the neighbourhood, belonging to the minor daughter of a rich gentleman from Petersburg, who had lately died.

"But now go away," she concluded, turning towards the peasants. "I shan't remain here any longer talking nonsense with you."

But the peasants did not move; they gazed silently at one another, though they knew by experience that Anna Grigorievna never altered her opinion.

"Well, and how will it be with the meadows?" asked the tall youth with the high-pitched voice, in a hesitating way. "The Maxavatoffsky ravine will have to be given back on the 9th."

Anna Grigorievna proved more compliant about the ravine. Having transacted this business to their satisfaction, she called Jacob to her, and turned away to re-enter the house, when suddenly two men broke away from the crowd and sank on their knees before her. These were the two fiercest brawlers in the assembly, who always incited the rest. Such persons often feign the greatest submission towards their masters, and try to win them through meekness.

"Matushka! Anna Grigorievna! don't ruin us! be a real mother to us!" they cried whimperingly.

Some rural guard had taken away their horses, which had been found feeding on the manor ground. Anna Grigorievna decided this question in favour of the peasants, and talked very sweetly and condescendingly to them.

At this moment the sound of approaching bells was audible.

"Some visitor, I think," she said, listening.

"Yes," answered Jacob. "It must be the ispravnik;¹ at least it seems to be his troika."

The ispravnik, a retired staff-captain named Berendeteff, was a man who, though he had left youth far behind him, was still very hale and hearty, exact to impossibility, and very devoted to ladies. His coats were always brand-new, his beard carefully combed and perfumed, and his dog-skin gloves of a dazzling cleanliness. He always spoke very softly; and though he was entirely a man of the old school, yet he liked occasionally to put forth advanced ideas. Whenever he happened to be in ladies' society, his voice and manner at once became affected and tender, and he never missed an opportunity of applying his dyed moustache to their hands, whether they were soft or wrinkled. He was, above all, full of the importance of the place he occupied, and was often offended because society in general did not grant to police officers the consideration which he thought was their due. There were occasions when he did not only try to show his power to the peasants, but even put the landed proprietors themselves in mind of his official rights. He availed himself of every possible opportunity to proclaim loudly the new doctrine of all men being equal before the law. It must be con-

¹ Bailiff of a district.

fessed, however, that he had never tried to thwart Anna Grigorievna : firstly, because she was a lady ; secondly, because he was a little afraid of her, feeling, perhaps, that she did not exactly love him.

And now Amfiloxi Nikandrovitch Berendeteff once more made his obedience to the mistress of Biälastolby, and bent reverently over her hand. But though he talked with a vivid interest about her new seeds, and praised her splendid autumnal shoots, yet she guessed that there was something else on his mind, and that he had not come over simply to pay her a visit. She allowed him, however, sufficient time to pour out the torrents of his eloquence, and was rather glad of it, because she had time to get coffee ready, without which no one was ever sent away from her house. So he chatted gaily on, until she stopped him with the question,—

“You have, perhaps, some serious business with me, Amfiloxi Nikandrovitch?”

“Business! I beg your pardon! What an idea! I long intended to pay you a visit on my way to Nikolsky. I am going to dine there to-day; so I thought I would just pay my respects to that young niece of yours who is living here with you.”

Anna Grigorievna looked straight into his eyes.

“Oh, that’s it!” she mentally ejaculated. “Nadia is not at home just now,” she answered gruffly.

“I am so sorry,” said the ispravnik softly. “I’ve heard so much about her. She is a beautiful, lovely

girl, they say,—something like an angel." Anna Grigorievna did not answer.

"But, you see," the other went on, in a half whisper, drawing near to her chair, "it is our duty to observe certain formalities; so what can I do? Our chief knows that this young girl once had to do with people who are not exactly renowned for the solidity of their principles."

"Excuse me," resolutely interrupted Anna Grigorievna, "but this is no business of yours. Nadia lives in *my* house; I am her guardian, and answer for her myself."

"I know, of course, I know," said the ispravnik, in his sweetest tones. "Do you really fancy I could suspect you, or feel the slightest distrust towards you? But youth, you know, is easily led astray; and who is not easily tempted nowadays; say yourself? Temptation is wafted about in the very air we breathe, just as the perfume of the rock-cherry at this time of the year; and this may have its good sides, I dare say. Yet, in spite of all this, we are obliged to observe and to watch; and though the tender age of your niece and her presence in your house exclude every idea of a possible danger,"—here he began to look very important and pleased with himself for using such high-sounding words—"still, if you refuse to guide her——"

"But did I not tell you just now that I am her guardian?" repeated Anna Grigorievna impatiently.

"Granted, granted!" the ispravnik went on, with a sweet smile; "therefore I shall only ask you to sign a small certificate, namely, that your niece——"

"Don't you believe *me*, Amfiloxi Nikandrovitch?" again interrupted the old lady.

"Beg your pardon; it is only such a very small formality,—he! he!—a sort of promise that your niece will never more have anything to do——"

Anna Grigorievna started up, drawing her imposing figure up to its full height, and fixing her quick grey eyes on her interlocutor.

"To do!—in my house! For whom do you take me, then? And you fancy I shall sign such a paper? I never liked to have anything to do with the police, my dear sir; but I answer for Nadia as for myself, and I am ready to repeat this to you as well as to the governor, if he takes the trouble to call on me."

Poor Amfiloxi Nikandrovitch was so thunderstruck at this outburst that he never found an answer, and quite lost the consciousness of his official dignity.

"We are just going to have coffee. May I offer you a cup of it?" Anna Grigorievna asked, in a perfectly quiet and friendly voice.

But Amfiloxi Nikandrovitch refused to take anything on the plea of being obliged to hurry on to Nikolsky.

The door had hardly closed upon him before Nadia appeared on the other side. She rushed up to her aunt, and threw herself on her knees before her.

"Dear, darling aunt, forgive me for all I said and did this morning," she cried eagerly. "I am such a wicked, wicked girl ; I can't conquer my own temper ; I am unworthy of all your kindness."

The young girl was trembling with excitement while trying to fold her arms round her aunt's neck. Now that she wished to make up for her previous outburst of temper, there was something passionate, abrupt, and unmanageable in her whole bearing.

"I forgave you long ago, sweetie," said her aunt softly, stroking her hair. "Don't I know that it is impossible to expect you to behave exactly like other people ? "

"Yes, I am a bad, wicked girl," repeated Nadia, hiding her face in her aunt's lap. "I heard this man just now talk of me, and know that you are threatened with troubles because I live under your roof." She raised her head, and, gazing into her aunt's eyes, went on in a still more excited tone : "I came here to ask your pardon for my behaviour, and on opening the door I heard my name, and remained here. But this was not wrong," she suddenly added, in a challenging tone. "Yes, in fact, I have been listening." And the expression of her face showed that if only one word of reproach was said, all her rebellious feelings were quite ready to fly out again.

"Well, listening is not exactly very nice, I confess," said her aunt, smiling ; "but this time it is not such a very great misfortune."

"But don't you understand, auntie, that it is quite impossible for me to remain here?" she cried hotly; "not because I won't stay, but because you are threatened on my account with such unbearable nonsense; and this I can't and won't allow!"

Nadia was still on her knees before her aunt, and her hands still clung to the old woman. A hot flush burned on her cheeks, and her whole face expressed a strange mixture of regret, shame, and indignation; and all these feelings manifested themselves in that passionate and violent way which characterized all her doings.

"How is this possible?" asked Anna Grigorievna, astonished. "You are afraid on my account? Did you not hear how I silenced this stupid man? He fancied he could make me sign some agreement. I really should like to see in what way they could do me any harm."

"No, auntie," said Nadia, getting up; "no shadow, even the slightest, ought to fall upon your house on my account. Let me go. I am no fit inmate of your house."

"No, my dear," answered Anna Grigorievna, in a firm and decided tone, "I shan't let you go on account of this. Later, when you are quieter, you will consider all this in quite a different light. I promised your father to watch over you. I shall keep my word. But don't be anxious on my account. There is, however, one promise which you must make me,

Nadia," she added, after a moment's silence ; " don't ever try to send letters or messages in secret to—you know to whom—well, to this Neradovitch, on whose account you quarrelled with Volodia this morning. As you heard what the ispravnik said, you must understand that this precaution is necessary. You promise, do you ? "

For some moments Nadia remained standing before her aunt in deep silence, her arms crossed on her breast, her eyes stubbornly bent on the ground. It was easy to see that she could not come to a decision, and was weighing the promise her aunt wanted of her.

" Yes, auntie," she said at last, in a subdued voice, " I promise."

She turned to leave the room, but Anna Grigorievna again caught hold of her, and drew her head down to her lips.

CHAPTER V.

DURING the course of this whole day, Volodia went about with drooping head, sauntering from one place to another, without knowing what to do. He felt dreadfully guilty towards his cousin Nadia, and could not understand how he, so blindly devoted to her, could have spoken such harsh, untrue words. His only comfort was that he now, at least, felt perfectly sure of his own feelings, and knew there could be no possible happiness on earth for him without her. Yes, he ought to have an explanation with her, to sue for his pardon, and to tell her of his love. He would do it on this very day, because he deemed it impossible to live on through the ensuing hours without having obtained her forgiveness. He looked for every opportunity to meet her ; but, strange to say, as soon as he discovered her, even from afar off, he felt as if he could not even raise his eyes to her, and actually fled from her presence. So the morning passed, and towards afternoon Volodia, having for the tenth time made up his mind to go and look for her, was standing on the terrace, worrying with the end of his stick the black, curly head of his setter

Nero, who was quietly stretched out at the feet of his master. The dog, disturbed in its lazy repose, probably wondered that a human face could wear such a troubled look as that of Volodia's on this lovely April day, when the sun was shining so brightly and Nature preparing itself for a new enjoyment of life.

Suddenly a merry peal of laughter was heard out of the open window of the second floor. Volodia quickly raised his head.

"Do you know that I have been wondering at you for the last half-hour?" exclaimed Nadia. "What on earth are you doing there? It would be much nicer to take a walk before dinner; won't you? If you like, I'll come down at once."

The embarrassed young man was still seeking for an answer, when Nadia, snatching up her hat and parasol, rushed downstairs, gaily carolling forth one of her favourite airs. Volodia stared at her, unable to understand the change which had taken place within her, so little did this bright and laughing Nadia resemble the gloomy girl who had answered him in such a proud and defiant way a few hours before.

"Are you really no longer angry with me, Nadia?" he asked shyly, a hot blush on his cheeks.

"I think you might judge from my face whether I am angry or not," she answered archly.

The young people passed through the farmhouse

out into the fields, and Nadia was as wildly gay as a child. She felt very light-hearted indeed. Volodia, however, was pondering on the declaration he was going to make, and the high spirits of the young girl left him unmoved. He only answered her with short monosyllables, hardly knowing what he said.

Nadia at last looked laughingly into his face,—

“What’s the matter with you, Volodia?” she asked. “Did any one offend you, or are you ashamed of something?”

Volodia murmured that something had indeed vexed him.

“Besides, I know that you want awfully to say something to me,” she went on, in the same joking tone, “but you can’t summon sufficient courage to say it; is it not so, cousin Volodia?” she added, as he remained stubbornly silent.

She, however, got no answer, and Volodia continued to strike the stray shoots of the cytisus bushes with his stick. Nadia’s face became overclouded.

“Believe me, dear Volodia,” she said, “it would be much better for both of us if you would never mention the subject which now weighs on your mind, but rather try to forget it entirely.”

But this advice had just the contrary effect. The confession, which his shyness had kept back so long, now flowed unrestrainedly from his lips. Nadia herself wondered at his burning eloquence; her wish to laugh at him vanished; she did not even try to

check him, only shook her head from time to time, when some utterly impossible idea struck her more vividly ; but when he asked her at last if she would be his wife, because the prospect of such a bliss had become the sole dream of his life, she put her hand on his arm.

"Your wife, Volodia !" she repeated, and her voice sounded very soft, even sad ; "is this possible, indeed ? Do we suit each other ? Now, please, tell me what sort of wife do you think I should make you ?" And she smiled very faintly.

These words only poured oil on the troubled waters, and Volodia assured her that it was the easiest thing in the world, that they would lead an ideal life together, and that—his words at least proved it sufficiently—it was the passionate wish of his heart.

Nadia now understood that this half-childish whim would not pass as quickly as she had thought. She began to talk to him sweetly and tenderly, as grown-up people talk to little children. But this sweet and tender tone was so far from the one Volodia burned to hear that he quickly detected the difference. He listened silently, with drooping head, sighing from time to time, just as children sigh over a broken toy.

"How can you, at your age and with your character, want to marry a girl like me ?" she continued. "I do not belong to those who trust the whole happiness of their life to one man, and then look quie

on afterwards as it slips through their fingers. Believe me, my dear, your love would never stand the test of those conflicts which we are sure to have, even during the first months of our wedded life. Why can't we remain friends as we are now? It would be so much better. I offer you, it is true, what people call a poor comfort; still, you won't regret it. You'll see, your self-love alone has been wounded, and that, of course, I can't pretend to heal."

They walked on for some time in deep silence.

"Our paths in life will necessarily go asunder, and probably very soon, Volodia," Nadia said, on drawing near to the house. "You can't and won't follow me on the road upon which Destiny fatally pushes me onwards."

Volodia hotly protested against this, maintaining that she was unjust to him, and that he was not less free to sacrifice himself than she was.

"I am quite sure that you mean what you say just now," she retorted quietly, "yet I think I know you better than you do yourself. Believe me, you will soon learn to consider this affair in quite another light, and you won't long regret your disappointment. Happy those who pass lightly through life, and who do not devote themselves and their future to arduous questions!"

Volodia did not answer. He felt, perhaps, in a somewhat vague and dreamy way, that it was better

not to ponder upon far-off and dangerous problems when it was so easy and plain to be happy without them.

At this moment a tarantass,¹ with three piebald horses, dashed up to the entrance.

"Another visit," said Nadia, in a dissatisfied tone.

They were so near to the house now that it was easy to recognise those who stepped out of the carriage and walked up the stairs.

"Oh, it is Feodor Vassilievitch Tomiline," gaily exclaimed Volodia.

It was a tall, hale man, though no longer young, with thick, long whiskers, a very striking martial air, and an imposing carriage.

"What perfectly matched horses, splendid!" cried Volodia rapturously, gazing at the faultless team.

Nadia glanced somewhat mockingly at the young man on remarking his admiration of the horses.

"Are you not very glad that Tomiline came, Nadia?" asked Volodia. "He is such a charming old man!"

"I think it rather tiresome," she answered indifferently; "we are seldom a day without guests. Who is the other man who accompanies him?"

On the top of the stairs stood a young man with a yellow, oval face, looking like that of a guttapercha doll with its drawn features and sunken cheeks. He was carefully shaking the dust off his fashionable

¹ A long travelling coach.

coat ; the strange form of his tasseled hat, placed far behind on his head, and the monocle in his left eye, gave something ridiculous to his long and thin person.

"It must be some fop unknown in our parts! What can have induced him to come here? How funny! Well, there's nothing to be done now but to receive this gazette of fashion. Why does your mother not, once for all, refuse to receive all these uninvited guests?"

With these words Nadia ran up to her own room, leaving Volodia to welcome his mother's guests.

CHAPTER VI.

AT Biälastolby dinner was served exactly at four o'clock, and all the neighbours knew that they were heartily welcome at Anna Grigorievna's table, but that she never waited for any one.

Feodor Vassilievitch Tomiline, the justice of peace of that part of the district in which her estate was situated, had been her friend for many years. His small place—he was not rich at all—was situated in the nearest vicinity of Biälastolby; he spent the whole year round in the country, and often visited his old friend, whom he esteemed and admired, because she, a lonely widow, gave such a rare example of order and accuracy in the management of her estate. To-day he had come from the district town, accompanied by a newly appointed examining magistrate, called Konevetsky, who had just left the school of jurisprudence. This young man, dressed in the height of fashion, joined to the self-confident manners of a perfect fop the deepest contempt for his present occupation, which he had only condescended to accept as the unavoidable first step to higher honours. Though he had consented to call personally on the

first landed proprietors of the district, he had resolved to show them openly the deep contempt he felt for the provincial circle into which Fate and his superiors had suddenly transmitted him. He spoke through his nose, and never pronounced an r. "Ve'y glad to meet such ve'y cha'ming people in the p'ovince," he lisped, fancying this the height of elegance. This did not, however, make the slightest impression on his hostess.

"Has this milk-sop come to study here?" she asked of Tomiline.

The third dish had just been brought in when Nadia made her appearance. She greeted the guests with a passing bow, and sat down beside Volodia. To the youthful scholar of Roman right, this sudden apparition of a beautiful girl was a most welcome change in the dull routine of provincial life. He fixed his monocle more firmly in his left eye, and flashed round upon her with the whole weight of his overwhelming courteousness. But, alas, he experienced nothing but failure. She answered him politely, but showed openly how much she despised his compliments, his stupid French jokes, and the love-sick glances which he bestowed upon her. But he never observed this, and continued to pour his compliments into her ears, assuring her that it would be sinful to shut herself up in the country, that Anna Grigorievna ought at least to take her to Moscow, for though "*la Bialokamennara est très province, mais enfin on y*

trouve une espèce de société, qui ressemble à l'Europe, et comme de raison vous y serez la reine de tous les bals." Thus he prattled on in that Parisian dialect, which flourishes in the restaurants on the Nevsky Prospect.

"I was at Moscow once," answered Nadia, in Russian, "but not to go to balls; but you," she added, in a hostile tone, "you prefer European customs to ours, I suppose?"

"On fait ce qu'on peut," he answered, with a shrug. Then turning towards Tomiline, he went on,—"You told me, I think, that I should find horses here in the village to take me over to Slatursky, where an important inquest awaits me, did you not? From thence I might perhaps drive over to your place, and sleep there, if you will kindly allow it."

"I don't think you will be able to manage it; this business is not likely to be despatched in so short a time."

"Oh, yes," retorted the young man indifferently; "we shall have finished to-morrow. The ispravnik himself does not come before to-night. Ces braves paysans peuvent attendre. Besides, the witnesses were not appointed earlier than I was,—about twelve o'clock."

"And they have been waiting since then? Why did you not tell me this in town?"

"But I tell you that the ispravnik— Well, never mind; they can wait."

"So, instead of leading the inquest, you came to dine here!" exclaimed Nadia, aghast. "Is this also European custom?"

The young man was silent. Anna Grigorievna looked reprovingly at her niece, and quickly gave another turn to the conversation. The above-mentioned business being a peasant revolt involuntarily put her in mind of her conversation with her own peasants in the morning. She complained to Tomiline of their claiming a new division of the soil, and their opposing themselves more and more resolutely to the transformation of labour dues into yearly money payments.

"It is strange," she said, "to see how pertinaciously they believe in a second Emancipation. They don't explain what they want, but go on repeating, 'We are yours, but the land is ours.' They even now refuse to take a lease."

"Well, I rather think you ought to wonder at their living as peacefully as they do, in this age of delusions, especially when you see the efforts that are made to push them on to revolt. It is only three days ago that such a poor fellow was taken to the bailiff. By whom, do you think? By those very peasants who are now to be judged for revolt against the authorities. I could not but pity him, such a thin, weak fellow, his dress all torn; he must have been treated shamefully. He was living with the village priest, had been introduced to the land surveyor, and was busy distributing small tracts; as, 'The Story of

the Four Brothers,' or 'The Clever Mechanician,' etc. Once a peasant, finding him in a wine shop, asked him whether he knew what the Psalter was like, saying that as he lived with a servant of the Church he ought to know all the holy books. He looked angrily at him, and began to insinuate that God did not exist, that the Emperor and the nobility ought to be extirpated, so that they could enjoy life themselves. Upon which he was immediately denounced to the police. Poor young man!"

Nadia was hardly able to conquer her indignation as she heard these words. The young man was in her eyes a martyr, perhaps not very sympathetic to her, just as her faith in his cause was no longer very strong, but he was at least a disinterested supporter of this cause, and stood much higher in her opinion than those who laughed and scoffed at his unsuccessful efforts.

"Are the peasants about here as innocent as that?" asked Volodia.

"But do you know, Volodia, what those peasants do who are more intelligent and cultured? They only use their learning to enrich themselves, and to oppress their neighbours. Yes, our Russian peasants always were of a practical, even of a sentimental, turn of mind. They only consider the material improvement of their existence from a personal standing-point, and would never give a pennyworth for the French idols, "*liberté, fraternité, égalité*."

"But you say yourself that the peasants claim a new division of the land, that they have a perfect right to it. But then the commune is the real landholder, is it not?" cried Volodia, quite flushed with excitement.

The young lawyer widely opened his left eye behind his monocle, wondering to hear such strange ideas expressed in the house of a Russian landed-proprietor.

"Oho!" interrupted Tomiline, "the commune is, according to you, the present kingdom of justice, and the end of Russian development! Do you know the proverb, 'Rob the world of a thread, and the beggar will get a shirt out of it.' Now turn the phrase, and give the shirt to the world. How many threads would remain to every individual? Our peasants understood this long ago, therefore in your beloved communes those who are better off never think of helping their weaker brethren."

"Liberally spoken, indeed!" murmured Volodia.

"Why do you want to judge all from the liberal standing-point? We have here in our Sobranie such a landed proprietor, a very rich man, who thinks of nothing else but of talking and judging all according to liberal views. He hardly ever speaks in the Sobranie without nervously perusing the papers on the following day to see whether the local correspondent has not accused him of negligence. The papers never mention him, of course; but it once

happened after a sitting that a peasant accosted him, saying, 'You are joking, Barine, aren't you? otherwise we can't understand your words. You are always defending us, as if some danger was threatening us, while we are happy as we are. Would it not be better if you cared for your own business, and left us to ourselves?' Well, what do you think of this, Nadeshda Sergeevna?" asked Tomiline, suddenly addressing the young girl.

"I did not listen to your story, I confess," she answered sharply, "but I think in general it is much easier to sit at dinner discussing the peasants, than to expose oneself to some danger in defending them."

Anna Grigorievna glanced beseechingly at Tomiline, as if wanting him to drop the subject. He was silent, caressing his whiskers, with a pensive look, and for some time no one spoke.

After dinner Nadia settled down with her work near the window, as if wanting to avoid the rest of the society. Volodia began to discuss literature with Tomiline. He delighted in these discussions, though the old man laughed mercilessly at his radical ideas. Feodor Vassilievitch had remained faithful to the taste of his youth, and in spite of his grey hairs, defended warmly all the authors of the beginning of the century. He got quite lively telling Volodia how he and his fellow-students had once wanted to act the robbers of Schiller, how the local authorities,

having heard of it, had them put to prison, and how they contrived to act in the "Viatky,"¹ after all.

"What times these were! even Schiller prohibited!" he said; "yet youth was then, as it is now, full of faith in the future, glowing with enthusiasm, and though we knew what awaited us, none of us ever thought of observing the slightest prudence."

Nadia put down her work, and got up from her seat.

"Now, I think you have less right than any one else to accuse the present youths of want of prudence," she cried hotly, addressing Tomiline; "only fancy your condemning the poor little wretch who was taken into custody by the peasants!"

"Well, my dear child, I am rather of the opinion that Schiller and the present division of the soil is not exactly the same thing, and that our worshipping arts and literature has nothing in common with those people in whose eyes creation itself is nothing but the performance of some highly excited nervous system.

"Yes," answered Nadia slowly, "in your eyes a quiet admiration of poetry is the highest achievement, and you consider your imprisonment for the sake of your theatricals a great exploit, I dare say! It is more refined, more *aesthetical*, of course," she went on, with a contemptible stress on the word "æsthetical," "than to trouble yourself about the wants of the

¹ Prison.

common people; and I do not wonder at your having become afterwards an arbiter of the law, quietly executing the statute charter, which leaves the people without land, in spite of all the high-flown enthusiasm of your youth."

Having said this, she slowly left the room.

An hour later she was sitting in the arbour in the garden, a book in her hand ; but she was not reading. Tumultuous thoughts were whirling through her brain, while listening to the gay voices of Volodia and the young lawyer, who were merrily playing at billiards. Suddenly the tall figure of Tomiline stood before her. She started up, in order to rush away, but he kept her firmly back.

"Nadeshda Sergeevna, I want to talk to you. You offended me most deeply just now, but in spite of my old age I will forgive you, and rather try to alter your opinion of me. I do this for the sake of your father, with whom I served before Sebastopol, and who was a great friend of mine, though he is younger than I am by many years."

Nadia had first intended to interrupt the old man, for she never admitted any interference, but his voice was so sweet and sincere that she involuntarily listened to him in silence.

"The remembrance of my father does not touch me in any way ; if you have known him intimately, you will easily guess why."

"But I do not understand your saying this to me ;

in my generation we were not accustomed to discuss the virtues or vices of our parents with strangers."

This time the young girl was silent.

"And now," continued Tomiline, "let me tell you something out of my own experience, though you scorn my generation so deeply. Our surroundings, our ideals and problems, change as quickly as on the stage, but the human mind remains the same. The present generation is as easy to be allured as ours was. I only wish that the objects of their enthusiasm may remain as high and pure, and that they may not stick in the mud themselves, while they try to soar upwards to unknown heights."

Nadia flushed, and a sharp retort trembled on her lips, but he again interrupted her.

"Listen a little longer to me, my dear child ; you know that talkativeness is the chief fault of old age."

They were walking on a narrow footpath. The young girl hardly knew herself, why she listened so submissively to this man, who, half an hour ago, had appeared to her the very representative of an order of things which was perfectly loathsome to her.

"There was a time, and not so very long ago, though you don't remember it," continued Feodor Vassilievitch, "when those very liberties that seem so insignificant to you were like an unattainable dream to us. The remembrance of the unfortunate 14th of December weighed like a dark shadow on our youth.

In those times no young man ever escaped suspicion. You ridiculed what I told you about Schiller's robbers, but I could tell you a hundred cases in which young lives were shipwrecked in the same innocent way, and yet our blood coursed hotly through our veins. We wanted to breathe freely; what was to be done? how were we to get out of the narrow frame of daily life, if not allowed to seek salvation in the world of poetry and abstractedness? In your eyes these were but small struggles and small sufferings; but were they lighter because our thoughts were not allowed to soar on high? And yet, however limited our life, however visionary our interests, we never lost our faith in the future, in Russia itself; and do you know, my dear, in faith alone lies the strength of mankind."

Nadia listened silently, then she answered in a somewhat faltering way,—

"And yet nothing resulted out of all these beautiful ideals; the manual opposition of to-day sits quietly in the country enjoying the fruits of the rights of serfage."

"What! Nothing!" exclaimed Feodor Vassilievitch. "And the 19th of February, which did not cost one drop of blood to Russia! Manual opposition, you say! and the sacrifices of this opposition were so very small, you fancy!"

And Feodor Vassilievitch began telling her different things out of his past recollections, naming a long list of talented youths who had been swallowed up by

the abyss, and not even had the possibility of serving their country. He told her how, about the year '48 or '49, he had himself been suddenly carried off to Perm by a "Feldjäger," though he was already in a very good position in Petersburg, only because he used to have evening parties of young students at his house.

"I spent five years seemingly forgotten. It was not until the Crimean War that I got into the army. Behind the walls of Sebastopol I found many of my comrades, whose lives had been wasted like mine, but none of us cursed our native country, or wished some foreign power to deliver us; we all fulfilled our duties towards the Emperor and Russia. And if now, in my old age, I enjoy Pushkine and Schiller, and nurse my hot-house flowers instead of making opposition, do you really think this so wrong and so ridiculous?"

Nadia only glanced at him, but this mute answer must have sufficed him, for he pressed her hand firmly.

Faint shadows were beginning to fill the garden, the moon in the cloudless sky was shedding its radiant light over the trees, the birds had ceased to chirp, and evening silence crept slowly over earth, like peace into a subdued heart.

"Nadeshda Sergeïvna, please come and serve tea," the voice of Terenty was heard down from the terrace. "Nicholas Ossipovitch Boroffsky has just come."

"Oho! our most solemn attorney-general;" said Feodor Vassilievitch. "Well, good-bye, I must be off; I don't like this man, I confess."

"He is said to be very clever."

"Clever? Y—es—but—well, you'll judge for yourself."

And though Nadia tried to detain him, he declared that the spring sowings were not finished in his fields, that he would be obliged to get up early on the following day; so, avoiding the manor-house, he passed on to look for his tarantass.

CHAPTER VII.

NICHOLAS OSSIPOFF BOROFFSKY had been appointed attorney-general at C—— a year ago, and during this time he had succeeded in making himself the reputation of an uncommonly clever man, quite above the usual average of men. There was something enigmatical in the turn of his mind, in his way of talking, and in his intercourse with others. Many people deemed that he never said what he thought, and often fancied they discovered a covert scoffing in his words. But in spite of all this, he could not be called a reserved man ; on the contrary, like most eloquent people, he took an easy and brilliant part in conversation, and never affected that studied coldness with which mediocrity often covers its wants. Every conversation with him left a deep impression on the mind of his interlocutors, which it was not easy to get rid off, however personal the opinion which he had emitted and defended. But he had been very unwise in neglecting the society of C——, and especially the provincial ladies ; this sin was the more unpardonable in their eyes as he was only thirty-five years of age, had a tall, hand-

some figure, very expressive if not regular features, and a pair of deeply-set, dark grey, and very sparkling eyes. Ladies in general, and especially provincial ladies, are fond of mysteries; therefore the very unapproachableness of Boroffsky raised him in their eyes, but increased at the same time their rage at seeing him steer safely through all the traps that were set for him. Two other mortal sins weighed heavily against him—he never touched a card, and hated all sorts of slander.

At Biālastolby he was a very rare guest, having few things in common with Anna Grigorievna. To-day he had come to see her on his way back from Nikolsky, where he had dined. He brought her a message from her new neighbour, Elena Michailovna Ordinzoff.

This lady, who had been a widow for about a year, had lately settled at Nikolsky, an estate that had been bought by her husband just before his death. According to his will, the brother-in-law of Anna Grigorievna, Peter Nicolaïevitch Koretzky, had been appointed guardian to his only daughter and heiress, Jenny, a young girl of fifteen years of age. This circumstance, which had not been very palatable to the stepmother, obliged her to enter into relations with the inhabitants of Biālastolby, and she had therefore asked Boroffsky, whom she had often seen in Petersburg, to announce her visit to Anna Grigorievna. But, besides this commission, there was

another matter which preoccupied him during his drive, though he had not the intention of communicating it to Anna Grigorievna. At Nikolsky he had met the *ispravnik*, who had mentioned the strange young girl who had come from Moscow, and whose presence had roused the apprehension of the public authorities. The few details of Nadia's past life which were known to Amfiloxi Nikandrovitch were transmitted to his listeners with the most wonderful openness. "They say she belongs to the very worst set," he said of his own accord, without having the slightest reason for this assertion ; "but at the same time, she is said to be quite lovely."

"So that's why you wished so much to see her," began one of the guests, in a bantering tone, knowing the weakness of the *ispravnik* for the fair sex.

Nicholas Ossipovitch listened silently to the words of the *ispravnik*, feeling the whole time a strong desire to see this mysterious young girl, who possessed such a dangerous charm that she had already succeeded, at eighteen years of age, in rousing the alarm of the officials. It was not the first time that he had heard about her, so he resolved to avail himself of the present opportunity to make the acquaintance of a girl who had turned so decidedly away from the usual beaten track of women's life. To see her among the peaceful surroundings of country life seemed doubly alluring to him. Since his appointment to the town of C——, he had almost exclusively

occupied himself with political questions, studying them with the greatest care; and had thus made himself the reputation of being the merciless persecutor of all those who wanted to put the creation of their own imagination into the place of the dry realities of life.

The first person who met his eyes at Biälastolby was Konevetsky, giving himself up to the pleasures of the billiard-table. He at once beckoned him to his side, and gave him some instructions, which must have been very urgent, for Konevetsky quickly turned away, and rushed out of the room in search of a horse and a telega, to whom he could confide his precious person and elaborate toilet. Nicholas Ossipovitch ruled his subordinates with an iron rod, and peremptorily refused Anna Grigorievna's offer to give him her own horses.

"Why spoil such young people?" he said. "It won't hurt him to be a little jostled about. He will work so much the better for it to-morrow."

When Nadia came into the drawing-room, she had made up her mind to treat Nicholas Ossipovitch in a very cool way, having heard a great deal about him which was not exactly to his advantage; yet a little bit of curiosity mingled, at the same time, with her inimical feelings. In her eyes he was the personification of an order of things perfectly odious to her. But at her first glance she saw how utterly powerless she would be against him; she felt as if she had sud-

denly been changed into a little child, as if all her scorn and anger would only provoke a smile on his lips. When she came into the room, he got up, bowed to her, and sat down again in utter silence. His eyes only rested for one moment on her face, and she was obliged to confess that never yet had eyes gazed upon her from out of such depths, nor with such a quiet and imperious expression. She felt vexed at this, bowed silently to him, went up to the tea-table, and hid herself behind the hissing samovar.

Her entrance did not put a stop to the discussion which was going on between Nicholas Ossipovitch and Volodia. The former, after having excused himself for sending Konevetsky away in such an uncere- monious way, said that the Slatursky business, though perfectly absurd, was very important, and ought therefore to be despatched as quickly as possible. "These disorders having repeated themselves pretty often of late," he said, "a warning would be necessary. Such powerless and weak outbreaks of insubordination only harm those who plot them, and ought therefore to be repressed at once."

"Then it is owing to your commiseration that these poor people have been put into prison?" asked Volodia.

"Certainly. Do you think it would have been better to have read them a lecture on the Imperial law, and refuted them by logic? Nothing is so ridiculous as such a powerless insurrection, for it

leads to nothing at all." It was impossible to see on his face whether he regretted this fact or not. "These revolts in the country can only be compared to wild beasts breaking loose from their chains: they devour all those they meet, without gaining the liberty for themselves. There is but one way in which to repress them,—military power,—for with gentleness nothing is to be done."

Volodia answered somewhat hotly, but Boroffsky refuted all his arguments, his voice remaining perfectly soft and quiet. And, strange to say, though youth generally rebels against any sort of superiority, yet Volodia was carried away by the brilliancy of his eloquence, and was quite ready to consider him as much of an authority as his favourite heroes of radicalism.

Among other topics, conversation lighted upon the unfortunate young man whom the peasants at Slatursky had delivered up into the hands of the police.

"What do you think?" asked Volodia. "Will the people ever answer to a call of the propaganda?"

A slight smile played round Boroffsky's lips.

"They have gathered material enough to light a great fire," he answered evasively; "the only question is, whether the matches with which they mean to light it will answer. However, who knows? Our business is to extinguish these matches most zealously, before——"

"Auntie, your tea is ready," exclaimed Nadia

And they all started at the strange harshness of her voice as she said these few words.

Boroffsky sat down beside her, and taking the tea-cup from her hand, smiled at her with a strange expression of self-possession, almost of defiance. "In spite of all your present hate of me," his eyes seemed to say, "I shall get you to listen to me with interest, even with sympathy."

"Did you ever see a large ball-room lighted up with a saltpetre thread?" he asked, addressing her. "How the fire rushes suddenly from one end to the other! Well, our country puts me in mind of such a ball-room, only much, much larger, in which people have been trying for ever so long to light it in this way, but the saltpetre thread was too short, or they had not put it rightly, and it went out, after having flashed out in different places."

And again the same mysterious smile lighted up his face, as if he expected the four corners of the room to blaze up into fire.

Nadia remained silent; so Boroffsky passed to another topic, telling her of all the trifles which made up his present life, after which he touched on higher questions, standing much above the small frame in which his life was set. His observations were so amusing that Volodia often answered him with a hearty peal of laughter, while he looked himself perfectly indifferent, and seemed to deliver his sharp observations quite unconsciously.

"You seem to be reciting a story about provincial life, so little does it move you," said Nadia, at last.

It might be that his intention had been to draw the young girl into conversation, for a bright smile lit up his face on hearing these words.

"Move me!" he repeated, with a hearty laugh. "Don't you know that my chief occupation is to accuse and to pursue?"

"I know whom you pursue," exclaimed Nadia, with flaming eyes, "and know how you pursue!"

"There you are mistaken, Nadeshda Sergeevna. You look upon me as a bloodthirsty oppressor, don't you? Well, I can assure you that, while fulfilling my duties, I have not the slightest inimical feeling towards those whom I happen to pursue. I am perfectly independent, I assure you. If you are obliged to pull filthy weeds out of the soil, can't you do it without passion and ill-will?"

"But don't you see that this cool indifference is a thousand times worse than the most violent hatred?"

"Perhaps; it depends upon our standing-points. As for me, I confess that this difference does not exist at all. Who is better or worse among those whom we accuse of the so-called 'political crimes,' I don't know; we never happen to think of it. Those people have left the beaten track of society; society crushes them, just as a train crushes all that lies on the rails, and as they would have crushed us, had they been in our places."

"But a train is sometimes thrown off the rails! Don't forget this."

"Well, if this were to happen, the colloquy would be a different one indeed."

Nadia stared at him in speechless wonder. She was vexed with herself for having been carried away by this conversation, in spite of her contempt of this man, who always remained equally quiet and passionless.

"Well, and this boy whom the peasants gave up to justice three days ago," she began again, "do you intend to treat him like the others, though he is only twenty-two or twenty-three years old?"

"What can I do?" answered Boroffsky, with a shrug. "We have convincing proofs in our hands. So you already know of this?"

"I once saw him."

"Where did you meet him?" cried Anna Grigorievna, in an alarmed voice. "You never went into the prison at Slatursky, I hope?"

"I did not see him at Slatursky," answered the young girl reluctantly.

"Will you allow me to finish your narrative for you? You probably saw him at Biälastolby, when he came on a visit to the priest there. Is it not so? You see that I am very exactly informed, am I not?" said Boroffsky, without waiting for her answer.

Anna Grigorievna raised her hands. How could it be that a propagandist appeared on her own estate, and was on friendly terms with the son of Father

Sosima, who had been her own priest for more than twenty years?

Boroffsky hastened to comfort her with the assurance that this young representative of the *Semlia i Volia*¹ had not found the slightest sympathy among her peasants, and then added,—

“Now allow me to smoke a cigarette on your balcony, please. I know you can’t endure the smell of tobacco; and I, miserable man, can’t do without it.”

Volodia led him out on the terrace. The young man had already discovered that Boroffsky was a clever man, though he belonged to the opposite party, so he overwhelmed him with questions while they paced the terrace up and down; but Boroffsky did not seem to attend very much to his words, and was already turning to re-enter the house, when the lovely face of Nadia suddenly appeared in the doorway.

“How imprudent!” exclaimed Boroffsky, with a slight tinge of heartfelt interest in his voice. “How can you come out into the evening air in such a thin dress! The month of April is very treacherous.”

Volodia rushed off towards the house to fetch her a shawl.

“I must talk with you,” said Nadia quickly, walking up to him. “Please don’t think of my health. I only came to implore you on behalf of the young man of whom you talked to-day.”

¹ *Earth and Liberty*, a Radical newspaper in Russia.

"Whose acquaintance you made at Father Sosi-ma's," interrupted Boroffsky, in a slightly ironical tone. His face took a stony expression, while a scornful smile played round his lips.

"Indeed—would you not—could you not—only this once—look through your fingers?" she went on, without heeding the expression of his face. "Or do you think it very strange that I, whom you hardly know, have the courage to address this request to you?"

"Not at all; but I don't understand you," he answered. And the ironical smile disappeared from his face. "I can understand that, clever and energetic as you are, you take an interest in the business itself. But what of this individual? Opposite this huge, eternal strife, what is the life of such an insignificant being as this one? Or am I mistaken?" he asked suddenly, with an eager look into her face; "have you some personal interest in this man?"

"For whom do you take me? Should I then have interceded for him? He is weak, young, seemingly limited in his intelligence—this is why I plead for him."

At this moment Volodia re-appeared with a shawl, which he threw round her shoulders.

A slight silence ensued.

"You will perhaps understand me, Nadeshda Sergeevna," said Boroffsky, after a moment's silence, "when I tell you that I, too, am ruled by the same

impersonal motives as you are, and these motives oblige me to refuse you. Don't be angry with me, please. Later in life, perhaps you will understand the little value of the life of a single human being."

On hearing these words Nadia, strange to say, did not experience the withering contempt which they deserved.

"True strength always carries the day, Nadeshda Sergetevna," he continued; "and happy the man who knows how to secure it for himself. In our age this strength is not purely physical, of course; and he who vanquishes to-day can flatter himself that it is really and truly on his side. You remember, perhaps, that I compared the people just now to wild beasts? Well, it is not exactly true: wild beasts will never know any other strength than that of their teeth, while in the political strife both parties must try and secure the most perfect of weapons in order to conquer. At present these weapons are in our hands—you know what I mean—and we should be very stupid if we did not use them. Yet they may be taken from us some day, for real progress consists in not keeping these weapons as a particular privilege, but letting them pass from hand to hand. Therefore, our triumph is only the triumph of intelligence. It won't be difficult for you to draw some useful moral out of this."

Nadia looked wonderingly at him, unable to unravel the true meaning of this enigmatical speech.

"And now I am going to say good-bye to your aunt ; it is getting late," he said, holding out his hand to her.

Nadia almost unconsciously put her hand into his.

"But before I go," he went on, "allow me to give you a little bit of advice. Try and avoid the people whom you might meet at Father Sosima's. They can't be of any use to you ; and, who knows ? a pedantic lawyer like myself might take it into his head to put some very awkward questions to you."

He walked hurriedly off, without allowing her time for an answer. But Nadia experienced a strange, oppressive feeling. It seemed to her as if she would have to stand one day before this man as before a judge.

Later in the evening, when she walked into Anna Grigorievna's room to bid her good-night, her aunt lightly chid her for her sharp answer to Tomiline. Nadia listened to her with unwonted docility.

"I made my peace with him afterwards, auntie," she said ; "we shall be friends for the future."

"Well, and the other, the lawyer ; do you like him ? You talked a long time with him, I fancy."

"He is very strange, indeed he is," she answered evasively. "I can't make him out at once."

All that she had heard of Boroffsky passed hurriedly through her mind, and made her feel quite confused. She had been accustomed formerly to divide mankind in two distinct parts : one disin-

terested, ready to sacrifice themselves entirely; the other, just the contrary. And now the two persons whom she had seen on that day belonged both to the adverse party, and yet she had recognised in the elder of the two all those sterling qualities which she only attributed to her own party, while the other, who accused and exiled her partisans with the greatest indifference, stood on her own ground.

"Those will have the upper hand who have the best weapons, who are the most developed, the most cultured," he had said. Were these not the same words which she had heard so often among her friends, and did they not lead fatally to the result which Boroffsky deducted from them?

The young girl did not lie down until very late. Her short yet troubled life appeared to her as a riddle, to which she had lost the key. Life was no easy thing, and it was hard work to squeeze people and thoughts into the ready-made frame of conventional life. And yet there must be somewhere a firm support in life. But where? While thus reveling in the delight of the soft spring night, her thoughts reverted to old, long-forgotten days.

The dark outline of the garden, over which the moon threw its soft, silvery light, seemed overflowing with that deep peace which only belongs to nature, and which man, always on the look out for the right road, and always unable to find it, will never know.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE moment has now come for us to make the reader acquainted with the previous events of Nadia's life. For this purpose we must transfer ourselves to the town of O——, one of the largest centres of Southern Russia. The discharged colonel, Sergius Olsheffsky, lived here, with his wife and daughters, about the year 1855, in a small house that had been bought by him. He was no longer in his first youth, but it was easy to see that he had been a very handsome man, with an elegant figure, having still the wish to play a prominent part in society. He had always been a great favourite with ladies, and had largely availed himself of this advantage. He owed to this circumstance his marriage with the pretty but faded cousin of Anna Grigorievna. This marriage had been his salvation, for he was over head and ears in debt, and she brought him a very handsome dowry; but the spoilt favourite of women thought this good piece of luck his due, and considered his marriage only in the light of one of the many love-episodes of his adventurous life. Years did not alter his habits and dispositions. As soon as he was obliged to stay at home, he grew querulous and perfectly unbearable.

His poor little wife, quiet as a dormouse, bore these outbursts of temper with slavish patience, but her sad life undermined her health, and she died at thirty-five years of age, leaving two daughters, the eldest, Alexandre, about ten years old, and the youngest, Nadeshda, seven years old. Her death did not change his life, it only increased his fits of spleen, the unavoidable companion of people who have enjoyed life too much. Besides, there were other cares that pressed heavily on him : luck, which had favoured him so long, began to turn its back upon him. His money affairs were in a very bad state, and all he did to put some order into them failed. Nor did he thrive in his service or among his comrades. He had always been a most superior officer, and had distinguished himself before Sebastopol ; but his comrades did not like him better for that, and the commander-in-chief, though he praised him for his bravery and horsemanship, never granted him a reward. So, while some of his contemporaries had got three crosses of St. George's, and reached the rank of general, he only filled the place of a regiment's commander. Peace having been concluded, he left active service and took rank among the dissatisfied of this world. In a moment of bilious rage he put aside his uniform, and became the most zealous supporter of all sorts of advanced ideas ; but his noisy, rather harmless liberalism never drew the slightest persecution on his head, and he had not even the pleasure of fancying himself a hero. The

part which he now acted did not hinder him from pursuing his victories on the peaceful battlefield of hearts' conquests, though even here his successes grew slighter as the years rolled on. He accidentally found a governess for his growing-up daughters with a pretty face and a yielding character. He chose her without any premeditation ; but little by little he was tempted by the thought what a comfort it would be for him did she play a double part in his household. Though a severe critic of others' follies, he had evidently a very weak idea of his duties towards his own daughters. In his relations to them there was a strange mixture of good-nature and severity ; during the rare moments which he devoted to them he mostly joked or poured into their ears the dangerous seed of the flattest free-thinking. Whenever he took it into his head to sustain his authority in their presence, he either put on a Jupiter face or gave them a most severe, but always unjust scolding. Weak governments are always unjust, as is sufficiently known, whenever they try to be severe. It is not difficult to fancy what influence such behaviour had on the children's education. Children always possess an innate sense of justice ; every infraction of it shatters their trust in authority, and awakens a feeling akin to revolt in their young hearts. The girls neither feared nor loved their father. His free intercourse with them prevented them from respecting him, while his unjust scoldings provoked their antagonism.

Foreign influences increased the unhealthy impressions which the daughters of Olsheffsky carried away with them from their paternal home. He would have been glad to shut them up in some convent, to get rid of them as quickly as possible, but in his quality of a Liberal he remembered that convents were good for nothing. An article in some paper had told him this, in very choice language, some time ago. Therefore he thought fit to remain true to his convictions, and to put them into a female school. Here the seed which the hand of the light-minded father had sown thrived and ripened above every expectation.

Alexandra was put to school two years earlier than her sister. Her nature was passive, almost drowsy, but her curiosity was the more developed the less she was able to understand what she heard and saw. It was not strange, therefore, that she tried to make friends with the biggest schoolgirls, in order to get the answers she wanted to her questions, answers that did not always suit her years. A most alarming desire for knowledge awoke within her, and her eyes were opened to what passed in her father's home. The books her friends gave her had the charm of forbidden fruit. She wanted to be the equal of the elder girls, to be as *developed* as they were. This word was on every tongue in school as the highest possible praise. Thus she happened to come entirely under the influence of one of the girls of the first class, who considered herself the cleverest of all the scholars.

This was Varia Pokrovsky, the daughter of a poor tshinovnik,¹ a girl with an ugly face, hard, angular movements, and a rough, deep voice. But this unprepossessing exterior did not prevent her exercising a strong influence over the other pupils. They all feared her ; and there was, indeed, something very imperious in her surly ways. She always avoided every talk upon family matters, not being of a very communicative nature. This was, perhaps, the reason of her influence. Be this, however, as it may, her word was omnipotent in the school, and Sacha was very proud of having found in her a friend and a protector. She sometimes went to see her in her own home, where she happened to hear her talk most eloquently about some mysterious aim, to which everything on earth ought to be sacrificed. These incomprehensible speeches made Sacha feel as if in a dream, and she hurried home to her sister to repeat all to her. Nadia listened silently and with a great deal of attention. Her sister's enthusiasm did not immediately win her over ; still it left its traces on her mind. From Varia, or rather from her brother, Youry, who had just given up university, Sacha very often brought back books, the contents of which she was not able to understand, but which she nevertheless perused with the greatest attention.

Nadia, who by that time had also been put to school, once found on her sister's table one of young

¹ A civil functionary.

Pokrovsky's books. She sat down to read it with attention, though not with that blind devotion to Varia's authority with which Sacha approached these mysterious subjects. On the contrary, at first the language of the books struck her as very strange; but the less sympathetic it was to her the deeper did its meaning sink into her memory, and the more perseveringly did she try to master it. She had always thought it so very easy to love all human beings, and here she read about men's rights to take a bloody revenge for every personal offence. The mysterious hints of the book about an approaching life of bliss and liberty excited and tormented her. She wanted to understand the strange contradictions which existed between these vows of love to the poor—a love which found a warm echo in her heart—and those violent outbreaks of hatred and threats of ruin.

"Sacha," she exclaimed, turning to her sister; "take me with you to the Pokrovskys' the next time you go there. Why do you always go alone to see Varia?"

"Put that question yourself to Varia," she answered evasively; "I can't take you if you are not invited."

"Well, I say, of what use is it being such good friends, if you are obliged to be so ceremonious?"

"But you forget, my dear, that Varia is four years older than you. You are as unlike each other in years as in 'development.'"

And she dwelt on this word with a certain solemnity.

"Yes, of course, I am not worthy of listening to your clever conversation, I know," said Nadia, most unwillingly, for she burned to be treated like a grown-up person, now that she had accomplished her fifteenth year.

"But neither papa nor Sofia Petrovna will allow you to go." Sofia was the name of the above-mentioned governess. "They always send you to bed at ten o'clock."

"Not allow me!" exclaimed Nadia angrily, while a passing glow lit up her face; "as if I should ask them! But I see that you don't want me. Well, I'll do without you."

That same day, after school, Nadia turned suddenly round upon Varia, who was taking leave of her sister.

"Please listen to me," she said, frowning a little; "I have long wanted to ask a favour of you. Would you allow me to accompany Sacha when she goes to you this evening?"

And in this request there seemed to be something like a challenge.

"If it can give you the slightest pleasure, please come," Varia answered, shaking hands with her; "no one ever accused me of being inhospitable."

In the evening Nadia accompanied her sister to the Pokrovskys', without having asked any one's permission. Young Pokrovsky did not seem very glad at her appearance. He was a handsome young

fellow, rather small, with soft features, expressing the Slav good-natured indolence—quite different from the thin and sharp features of his sister.

“I fear you will feel a little dull with us,” were the not very courteous words with which Varia met the young girl. “But it is your own fault; you know that we are independent people, who brook no constraint.”

The small party sat down to the tea-table. Some glasses of weak tea, which had grown quite cold, stood on it. Varia never took any pains to make tea, all household duties being loathsome to her. Nadia felt instinctively that her presence was a constraint to everybody. Conversation flagged. Youry swallowed his cold tea with visible dissatisfaction, and for the first time, perhaps, since he made Sacha’s acquaintance he did not know what to say to her; while Nadia felt dull and out of sorts. Leaning both her elbows on the table, her eyes were rivetted on some small tracts lying before her. “Nothing but this!” she thought, “and they say here is the source of light.” The evening, however, was not destined to pass entirely in this dull and colourless way.

“You know, Varia,” said Youry, turning to his sister, “that Neradovitch intended to come to-night. I met him coming out of the university.”

Nadia gazed at Varia with such undisguised astonishment that she could not forbear laughing outright.

"You wonder that a man like Neradovitch honours us poor mortals with a visit, don't you?"

Neradovitch taught Russian literature in the school, and his young pupils looked upon him with such awe that it was perfectly natural if Nadia wondered at his visiting in the family of one of his pupils. For a few moments an embarrassed silence reigned at the tea-table; young Youry tried to twitch his almost imperceptible moustache, then suddenly starting up he whispered something in Sacha's ear, which made her blush deeply. She got slowly up, as if obeying him unwillingly, and then followed him into the adjoining room.

"Why do you look so embarrassed?" cried Varia, after her. "What is there to be ashamed of? Can't two people have something to confide to each other? So, go now; or are you afraid of your sister?"

Instead of answering, Sacha slammed the door after her; and before long the sound of a lively conversation, in a half-whispering tone, reached the ears of the rest of the party.

The whole of this scene seemed so startling to Nadia that she opened her large eyes and stared in speechless wonder at Varia.

"You don't approve of this, perhaps?" asked Varia mockingly; "but if you will associate with us, you must accustom yourself to our simple ways, and not blush at our doings."

At this moment the door-bell resounded, and a

soft, strangely deep voice, with a sharp, mocking ring in it, was audible in the ante-room.

"Young man," said the voice of the new-comer, "you know your duty, I see. All is in order, of course ; but where's your sister ?"

Having been told where she was, he opened the door noiselessly and walked into the room, twinkling with his small, black eyes, that were staring intently at Varia.

He was a tall, heavy man, about thirty-five years of age, with broad and fat shoulders, and a small head ungracefully set on these shoulders. He looked very stout and slow, though his movements, and especially his small, restless eyes, betrayed a nervous, lively nature. His face was not one to be easily forgotten : his black hair fell like bristles down over his low forehead ; and though the features of this pale face had something unfinished, yet the firmly compressed jaw of his tightly drawn mouth denoted firmness, power, yea, even cunning and wickedness.

"Sitting thus idly about ! Well, I say," he said, instead of greeting ; "and no tea served yet !"

Here he suddenly discovered Nadia, and his tone changed at once.

"What ! Nadeshda Sergeevna here," he said kindly, though somewhat mockingly ; "did you also come to worship Varvara Vassilievna ? Really, I did not expect to meet such a very young pupil here ; but, after all, the earlier the better."

And he sat down between the two young girls, staring so hard at Nadia that the poor child blushed all over.

"Don't be afraid of me ; I shan't swallow you," he said laughingly.

"I am afraid of no one," said Nadia, with childish self-confidence, though conscious of blushing still more furiously ; for his eyes remained rivetted on her face, and there was something like burning fire in them.

"You have strangely serious eyes for your age," he said ; "and unusually haughty eyebrows,—yes, very haughty. I never saw such a child's face. I remember having already made this observation once, during our lesson, when you answered me as if you had been the master, instead of me."

This unnatural joking tone struck unpleasantly on her ear, and she looked straight into his eyes with an inimical glance.

"I only fear that you'll feel dull in our society," he resumed. "Varvara Vassilievna is but eighteen years old, that is true, but then she is a very serious person—a great deal more developed for her age——"

"Enough, Neradovitch," cried Varia ; "you have courted Nadia sufficiently. Whom did you see to-day ?"

Neradovitch turned round and gave her such a withering look that she was silenced, and grew perfectly quiet, which seldom happened to her.

"It is not my habit ever to account for my doings ; you ought to know this," he said. Then again turning to Nadia, he went on : " Well, now, do tell me what made such a very young girl like you want to pass a whole evening with such tiresome people as we are ? No, I had rather give the answer myself. I see in your eyes that you came here to get some important answer, and as it always happens in such cases, you got no answer at all. Is it not so ? "

" She came here to look after her sister," said Varia, with a dissatisfied air. And again Nerado-vitch threw a furious look at her.

Nadia was so overwhelmed at all that she heard and saw in this strange house that she wanted to start up, rush off home, and never return any more ; but she felt rooted to the ground by the staring eyes of that strange man, who awakened within her a feeling of hatred and curiosity, as if he was always on the point of saying or doing something that would startle and madden her. Yet she tried to answer very quietly.

" I don't know if you can indeed read my face, but I had really the intention of putting a question to Varvara Vassilievna."

" I do not doubt in the least the courtesy of our charming hostess, yet I suppose that I might answer this question just as well ? "

But Nadia would not mention the books her sister read before any stranger, still less before her master.

"I have met your sister here very often, and was happy enough to win her confidence. Why do you fear me, Alexandra Sergeevna?" he cried, turning towards the door. "Did you ever think it necessary to occupy yourself with the education of your sister?"

Sacha returned to the drawing-room, sat down at the table, and rested her burning face upon her hands.

"Nadia did indeed read different things without my knowledge," she answered slowly.

"And you experienced that alarm which always precedes a conversion?" asked Neradovitch, again turning towards Nadia.

"Conversion! that's rather far off yet!" she answered, her eyes sparkling with excitement.

"What did you read?" he asked gloomily, as if he was going to judge her.

She named the book.

"Well, I dare say you did not find anything very nasty or very wrong in it?"

She bowed her head.

"And, in spite of that, you intend to go on with your reading, I presume?"

"I do," she answered decidedly. "I shall go on with my reading till I am perfectly convinced that all this is nonsense—wicked, horrid nonsense."

"Bravo! how energetic you are! at you tender age, too! But supposing you did not succeed?"

"How so?"

"Supposing you came to the conviction that this is the true source of light, what then?"

"Then!" she cried, and her eyes flashed. "But no! it can't be! What sort of love must that be which pushes men on to manslaughter?"

"And yet I tell you," he answered, as calmly as before, without taking his eyes off her, "that whenever you are convinced of the truth of my words, then you will believe many things that now seem strange and hard."

"And *you* say this?" she cried, starting up.

"Yes, I, your teacher—I who serve the State," he said, in a grave, solemn tone. "And with the same conviction with which I foretell you that you will be *one of us* I tell you that the future belongs to us, that we shall spill much blood,—our own and that of others,—but that we shall be blessed at last. Now you cannot understand how a road full of blood, death, and sufferings can lead to peace and love: do not even try to understand, only believe. A high and mighty work always requires blind instruments; and what great things on earth are achieved without blood and fire?"

She listened without being able to take in the strange meaning of his words, but she felt herself carried away by the fiery conviction which breathed in them. If he had tried to reason with her, to prove the truth of his assertions, she would certainly not

have yielded so quickly ; but she wanted something to believe in without understanding.

"We'll talk of this again some other day," he resumed, and his voice again sounded as quiet as usual. "Till then I am sure that Varvara Vassilievna won't refuse to lend you some books. And, do you know, if you wish it, we might meet here and read something together? Do not be afraid ; you will get to understand by-and-by."

Neradovitch did not stay long at the Pokrovskys'. He jested a little with Sacha, teased Youry, and then suddenly declared that he was expected somewhere else.

Varia was exceedingly annoyed at his behaviour.

"I hardly knew him again," she said to her brother ; "he talked nothing but nonsense."

"Did you expect him to walk through life like a solemn and theatrical conspirator?" asked Youry, laughing. "It is a pity, indeed, that you were not born in the first ages of Christianity, you would have made such a perfect saint !"

On their way home Nadia reproached her sister for her improper behaviour with Youry ; but Sacha only smiled and muttered some inaudible words.

"Well, yes," she said at last, "I confess that I like him. Is that so very strange? Ask the elder school-girls, and you'll hear that there is not one of them without a lover. Then look at our own home ! what example does papa give us?"

Nadia flashed out indignantly. Though she did not love her father, yet she had not quite got rid of her respect for him, and felt rather solemn about her relations to him.

"Or did you really never observe anything?" continued Sacha, forgetting that she had not understood anything herself not so very long ago. "Did you never wonder at the part which Sofia Petrovna acts in our house?"

Nadia wanted to make some objection, but Sacha pointed out to her two or three scenes which they had witnessed themselves, and Nadia's eyes were suddenly opened, and she understood things which she had hardly ever observed. But she did not accept this overthrow of parental authority as quietly as Sacha had done. Her heart rose in tumultuous indignation at her father's conduct, and on that evening Sergius Olsheffsky lost for ever the last shadow of an influence over his youngest daughter's mind.

CHAPTER IX.

NERADOVITCH was an illegitimate child. His father, a large proprietor in the government of Simbiesk, named Sapiegine, had no other children beside him. He had given him a careful, though somewhat fantastic, education, and had moreover strengthened the child in the idea that his future would be largely provided for; and now, just as he had been sent to university, and was leading there the life of a rich young man, he received the news of his father's having died intestate. The whole bulk of his fortune went to a nephew, who did not show the slightest intention of considering this illegitimate boy as a cousin. Nothing remained to the young man but 10,000 rubles, deposited by his father long ago in the bank for him, which remained as a sad proof of the instability of human relations. In his father's house he had always been treated like a son, though the old man had lacked the courage to acknowledge him. The cousin, on the contrary, made haste to let him feel all the disparity of their position. The indulged gentleman's son, Batoushka Liew Alexandrovitch—so he was called in his father's home—was suddenly turned into a homeless wanderer, and

this violent revulsion of fortune filled his heart with a passionate hatred, of which his relations had no idea at all. He now resolved to work hard enough to gain a position much higher than the one which he had lost. He resolved to live in the plainest way, in order to keep his small capital for future wants ; gave up all his elegant and luxurious habits, looked out for lessons, and went regularly to the lectures. But, strange to say, he failed entirely, in spite of his iron will. He found no lessons, was unlucky in the choice of his companions, and no work of his ever gained a prize ; in a word, when he left the university, he felt entirely crushed under the weight of unfulfilled wishes and heart-rending exasperation. The following years only increased this feeling. He found neither literary occupation, nor any sort of active service. Long and vainly did he try for a public place—he always got the answer that a philologist was only fit for educational work, and that the number of applicants for every vacancy was too great. So it happened that his hatred of one family in particular turned into a burning hatred of society in general. If there was no place in society for a man of talent and knowledge like himself, it must be turned up and down, or rather entirely destroyed ; he did not come to these conclusions through abstract theories—he had little confidence in them, and even scorned them. He thought there was but one road leading to power—a dark and dangerous one—but at

the end of which a large, unexpected view would burst upon him. Two qualities were necessary: a strong will, and the faculty of submitting to momentary bereavements. And these two he fancied he possessed to the highest degree. So he resolved, after all his failures, to take up the modest career of a teacher, his small capital being already greatly damaged by these two years of vain expectations. Having once decided upon this step, he resolved to live in peace with everybody, to avoid all collision with authority, and to enforce his pupils' respect through severity. He spent five whole years in a small, out-of-the-way place before he returned to Odessa. During this time all his faculties hardened and strengthened to such a degree that it seemed as if no misfortune could crush him. He had learnt to hide his hatred, but he nurtured it within his breast as carefully as the miser hides his treasure. The idea of failure never entered his mind; on the contrary, he felt perfectly sure that the day of victory was near at hand. In such a large town as Odessa he easily found a suitable field for his activity; and as he observed the greatest prudence, he increased the number of his friends, and gained little by little a great ascendancy over other people. Long years of expectation developed within him a most extraordinary knowledge of people and their characters, and he never trusted where he ought to fear. The authorities still trusted him, while he already was

given over hand and foot to the chiefs of the underground movement.

Even Nadia felt a prey to his witchery. She was carried away by the unfathomable depth of his mind, and, above all, by the steadfastness of his will. From her earliest childhood she had always sympathised with strong-willed people. Besides, Neradovitch did his best to deepen the impression he had made on her; for he was aware of his influence, and resolved to use the rare energy of her character for some future occasion. He saw that her young mind thirsted after some revelation, and was ready to follow wherever self-sacrifice and blind trust were necessary.

"We must be very careful with this little girl," he said to Varia, "or we might easily frighten her away for ever. It is much more important to gain her than her elder sister. She is thirsting after the seventh heaven. Well, she'll have it, and lightened up with Bengal light, too; but we'll have to hide all our 'realism and sobriety' in her presence."

"You are simply in love with that child, I think," said Varia, in a displeased tone.

"Well, that's my affair. But I tell you that this girl might be shaped into something which we have not yet seen among us."

And Neradovitch adhered strictly to his principles about her mental education, while Varia continued to treat her in a dry and malevolent way. This treatment, however, did not prevent her from visiting

frequently at Varia's house. Neradovitch also came very often, choosing the books which he thought fit for her development, and eluding all that was too coarse and out-spoken in his teaching. Besides, he strengthened his lessons with examples taken from real life. Every case of heartless oppression on one side, and of awful want, even hunger, on the other, was carefully communicated to her, to heighten her interest for the suffering people. But when she asked him how this brotherly love could clothe itself in such words of threat and vengeance as she heard him use, he answered her that this was necessary to frighten those who hindered the realization of full peace on earth.

A whole year passed in this way, and at the end of it she was a child no longer. A complete independence of thought and will, quite unnatural for her years, had developed within her; yet, in spite of this, she never gave any outward sign of revolt. But an ardent wish burned within her—namely, to complete as quickly as possible the insufficient education which she had received at school, and to master that domain of positive knowledge which, as Neradovitch assured her, would grant her a satisfactory answer to all the questions which still puzzled her.

About this time some riots broke out on a large estate on the Dniester, and military power was required to quell the tumults. This event created a great deal of sensation in all liberal circles, and the

most violent imprecations were hurled against this abuse of material power. Nadia fancied all these invectives of very little use to the poor sufferers.

"The peasants' affairs are nothing to us, don't forget this, Nadia Sergeevna," said a very harsh-looking youth. "We have only to do with the hideous social order in which such things are possible."

"But as this order exists, would it not be better to try and help those poor suffering beings, for their sufferings won't certainly be alleviated because there exists somewhere in the world a small society of people who talk of bettering the fate of mankind!"

"You reason quite wrongly, Nadia," said Nera-dovitch; "the oftener such events occur, the better; they only serve to illustrate the wrongs of our established social order, and people, you know, are only convinced by examples."

But this explanation did not satisfy Nadia.

"Well, then, if you are so bent upon helping," he went on, in his jesting tone, "we, of course, can only be grateful to you for such a blessed work. Your sister and you are perhaps the only persons here who possess large means."

"What means?" asked Nadia, much astonished.

"We who belong to the people are all poor, you know, but you and your sister possess an estate, as I have been told."

Nadia had never reflected upon the fact that their mother had left a large fortune. Their father was

their trustee, and they had only looked upon their pocket-money as belonging in reality to them.

"Here, perhaps, lies my duty, after all," Nadia thought; "here I might find the means of setting up real work. If my sister and I are really rich, we might do something to alleviate the sufferings of those poor people of whom we talk so much."

But the property of the young girls was in the hands of their father, and it was not likely that he would give it up to them. Neradovitch told her that the law allowed them to choose their own trustee, but Nadia refused to offend her father in this way. Sacha was not of her opinion, but even she quailed before the thought of entering into open contest with her father. But Neradovitch did not allow the seed he had skilfully sown to be smothered, and profited by every possible opportunity to remind the sisters of their duty in this respect. Besides this, another matter weighed on his mind. In spite of the great difference in years, the slender young girl had awakened within him a strong and passionate love, which he did not think of quenching, though he almost despaired of the possibility of satisfying it. Love with him was a sickly, burning feeling, much akin to wickedness. He knew perfectly well that one imprudent word, one too passionate look, would suffice to throw him down from the high position which he occupied in her eyes. Varia had guessed his secret, but she was too much afraid of him to let him

suspect how much she knew. It would be necessary for him first to take entire possession of her mind and will, to keep her in a perfect whirl of excitement, and then to use his authority over her for his own aims. But, above all, it would be necessary to break entirely with her own family. The wished-for opportunity soon presented itself. Young Pokrovsky had long wanted Sacha to elope with him, for he knew very well that her father would never give his consent to her marriage with a penniless student, who had been thrust out of the university on account of some very dirty business. To marry without her father's consent, money would be necessary, and she had none. Neradovitch, before whom they often discussed this hopeless position, once proposed a most original way to get out of it. Among his young student friends there was a Prince Toumanoff, a Caucasian, the son of a celebrated hero, who, in spite of victories and wounds, had left too little to his son to sustain his name and position. Surly and silent, the young prince did not thrive among his fellow-students, and his narrow mind with difficulty grasped the university teaching. Chance threw him together with Neradovitch, and he became one of his blindest adherents. Poor and passionate, like a real southern, Toumanoff was just the man to serve as a tool in the hands of others. Neradovitch decided that the young prince was to offer himself as a husband to Alexandra Sergeevna, as her father would never think

of refusing him. She accepted this proposal just as readily as Youry did, but, strange to say, Toumanoff himself made no objection, as they explained to him that with this sacrifice he obtained the liberty of the young girl, and thus put her whole fortune at the disposition of their holy cause. To make him acquainted with Olsheffsky was quite an easy thing, as the old man would feel flattered to know the son of a Caucasian hero. After three weeks, the whole affair was concluded, and Sergius Olsheffsky was obliged, willingly or not, to part with his eldest daughter's dowry. The most difficult thing of all had been to manage Nadia. According to her ideas Sacha ought to have married Youry. She offered to try and obtain her father's consent to this marriage, deeming the fictitious one with Toumanoff loathsome and abominable.

"But I am thus becoming the wife of Youry in reality," Sacha said; "the signification does not lie in the ceremony, and it is not my fault if circumstances oblige me to lie to my father. Why do *you* object, if Toumanoff consents? Don't you see how noble he is?"

And in fact, in the small circle of Prokovskys they looked upon the young Caucasian as upon a hero who had achieved a most chivalrous feat. But these arguments did not convince Nadia, and Neradovitch was obliged to come to the rescue to defend his own plan and conquer her objections.

"Of course, this lie is odious to you, I can understand that perfectly well," he said ; "but there are circumstances in life in which one must use violence, because two opposite duties are in conflict with each other, and the most important of the two must have the upper hand. But you can trust me, I fancy. You are convinced that I should never give you a wrong advice or a dishonourable one, are you not?"

Nadia had more than once experienced the mysterious power of this man over her. Her truthful, timid eyes could not sustain the look of his small, restless pupils : they sank before his.

"Certainly," she said softly, "I trust you ; whom should I trust here if not you?"

"Now, you see, though you are not entirely of my opinion, yet you submit to my judgment. The most important question is to free you and your money ; not that you might enjoy life, oh, no ! our aim is higher. You ought to live exclusively for our cause ; as long as you are under your father's roof, this is impossible. What does it matter if to gain this great end we avail ourselves of Toumanoff's good nature, and conceal the truth from your father ? This *is* a sacrifice, I confess ; but what victories have ever been won without sacrifices ?

Nadia listened with drooping head and clasped hands. She could not yet understand why a high and mighty work must be begun with lies and deceit.

"And yet," she thought, "this man can't ask any-

thing dishonourable of us ; his whole life is one of disinterestedness. Does he not teach that life ought to be devoted to work and to the defence of the weak ? How often has he dwelt on the obligation of sacrificing oneself ? and now that he asks for this sacrifice, I should refuse ! ” She raised her head, gazing straight into his eyes. Hers were strangely deep and not at all childlike eyes, though all in her—the soft, tender curve of the lips, the narrow shoulders, the harmonious flexibility of her slender form—still revealed the half-child.

“ I’ll obey you,” she answered ; “ I’ll hide all from my father.”

“ And after the marriage of your sister, you’ll go and live with her ? ” said Neradovitch, looking intently at her. “ Who knows whether you will not soon be called upon to exchange your school life for another more active one ? ”

“ Allow me to congratulate you upon your perfect imitation of a Jesuit’s manner,” exclaimed Varia mockingly ; “ you seem fully convinced that the aim sanctifies the means.”

“ I always found that a Jesuit’s part suited me most particularly,” he answered coldly.

His expectations, however, were not fully realized. Sacha’s marriage had quite unexpected results. Youry did not think it quite safe to take Toumanoff’s place as long as he lived in the same town as his father-in-law ; he proposed to settle somewhere else, and the

prince consented without difficulty. But whither go? Neradovitch offered his services, promising the help of some of his best friends in one of the largest towns of Russia, but the young man preferred to go abroad, in order to put as many miles as possible between him and the offended father. So they resolved to settle in Zürich, the light of positive sciences burning brightly on the shores of this lovely lake.

When Nadia heard of her sister's projects, she resolved to accompany her. She saw at last the way to that science, the doors of which had been shut upon her so long. Zürich presented itself to her in all the bewitching light of its activity. To her it seemed a sort of holy place; and once having resolved to go, no one, not even Neradovitch, succeeded in keeping her back. As soon as he was convinced of this fact, he lent her his help to get away, and managed, through some subterranean friend, to get her name put on the passport which Prince Toumanoff got for his wife. Thus Sergius Olsheffsky learned on the same day that his elder daughter had deceived him, and that the younger accompanied her abroad. However indifferently he had behaved till now towards his daughters, yet this thunderbolt sufficed to turn him into an old man. Remorse, but, above all, shame, broke his strength and vigour.

CHAPTER X.

ANOTHER year passed, during which Sergius Olsheffsky seldom heard anything from his daughters. Little by little he had submitted to his fate. Among his friends there was one who proved to him that it was rather ridiculous to lament so much the departure of his daughters and their rebellion against his authority, as no one ever minded such things now-a-days. Besides, he felt proud of the scientific heights to which they had climbed at Zürich. And see, some time later he most unexpectedly got a letter from Nadia, who wrote in a tone of proud independence and subdued regret, to tell him that Sacha had parted from Youry, and that they both wanted to return home, but asked beforehand whether he would receive them or not. The old man was so overjoyed at this news that he understood for the first time in his life how much he loved his children, after all. A month passed, and they arrived. Nadia tried to conquer her bashfulness as she alighted at her father's door, as if the past events of the last year were quite natural. She shunned every explanation, and only said that she

had had a long struggle with Sacha before bringing her to consent to their returning home. "Sacha was very much ashamed, but I told her that it would be of no avail, that it would be much better to ask your forgiveness and go straight back ; I was right, was I not ?"

A burning feeling of shame pervaded Nadia's whole bearing ; she would have thrown herself at her father's feet, but she conquered this wish and mastered her emotion.

"You were perfectly right, my love," answered Olsheffshy, somewhat shyly. "I am your father, and moreover a father of the present age, who has an understanding for all that youth——"

He had prepared a moving, but at the same time a dignified speech, but he broke suddenly off, and alas ! Nadia thought she had never seen him so small and undignified as now, when he proclaimed himself a liberal father.

Sacha, however, was not as shy as Nadia, and little by little they got all the details of her past life out of her. The radical Mecca on the bewitching shores of the lovely lake of Zürich had not fulfilled all the expectations of the young girls. The light of positive science, which had allured them from afar off, certainly blazed out into its full glory here. But the science itself seemed inaccessible to these worshippers from Russia, and something like distrust took possession of these new-comers. The celebrated

professor, Rotteneger, a bright light of German democracy, and a hero from the year of '48, most unwillingly admitted Russian scholars, although they had adopted all his theories about the part which phosphor plays in the moral and religious performances of the human brain. They were not luckier with their Russian acquaintances, who, though thrown amid a foreign, almost inimical society, did nothing but suspect and spy upon each other. The science, on whose account they had come to this lovely nook, retrograded to the second place. The question whether one ought to rebuild society after having destroyed it, or simply destroy it without rebuilding it, left them sufficient leisure for rioting and drinking, but none for attending the public lectures. Nadia was horrified and scared to think in what circles she had looked for truth, for she was too true herself to be able to shut her eyes to all these monstrosities. Yet her standard did not fall down from its height on account of the weakness of its supporters ; it remained pure and holy in her sight.

Those months passed at Zürich seemed very hard to her ; little by little she withdrew from all company, and thus roused the ill-will of her fellow-students, and especially that of her sister, for Sacha never observed anything, and only looked upon things through Youry's eyes. The young man revelled in the comfortable life which he led now, enjoying the feeling of being outside all family duties, and de-

livered from all molestations of his conscience. Nadia warned Sacha that it could not lead to anything good, but she would not believe her, and constantly quarrelled with her. The end came rather suddenly: the money which they had brought with them from Russia was spent in an incredibly short time, and on a fine morning Youry left Zürich, accompanied by a pretty, dark-haired girl, after having pocketed the greatest part of Sacha's fortune. He left a few words for her, in order to tell her that love is a free gift, to be taken back at a short notice, and that the enforced loan he had been obliged to make was in perfect accordance with the ideas of to-day. Sacha was entirely crushed, and Nadia had the greatest difficulty to bring her to talk of their future plans. Nadia had long ago decided upon leaving Zürich; she had lost all her illusions about the degree of science to be acquired there, the career of a physician did not tempt her, and she had got the conviction that the cause of the Russian people would never be forwarded there. She profited by the prostration of Sacha to get her to consent to return home.

And now they were there; but what was to be done? how ought they to live? The usual life of a provincial girl had grown impossible, and was, moreover, loathsome to Nadia; she continually repeated that she would never forsake the standard which Nerado-vitch revealed to her years ago, and that her whole life should be exclusively devoted to the poor and

suffering ; but how set about her work ? whose example follow to find work,—real, hard work—to get rid of phrases,—hollow, senseless phrases ? She vainly tried to discover what had become of Neradovitch. He was no longer a teacher. Many of his friends had left town, and all those who remained behind held aloof from her. Even Varia was no longer in O——, nor did Nadia wish to meet her. Toumanoff had not left yet ; but could they ever look again into his eyes ? She also foresaw that their relations with their father would not prove of long duration. And she was right. He soon got tired of his new part as a soft-hearted, liberal father. The hints which sometimes were thrown out at the club about the equivocal position of his daughters exasperated him. He became churlish, and often upbraided Sacha with having sullied his spotless name, and asked her mockingly whether she had liked her life abroad or not. Nadia flushed angrily at these insinuations, and hotly defended her sister.

“Be silent !” shrieked Olsheffsky ; “your nurse’s milk is hardly dry on your lips, and you already deem yourself very wise ! Don’t I know that you urged your sister on ? Without you she would never have disobeyed me.”

“So let us go now,” Nadia answered firmly. “We were not carried back by force, but returned of our own free will.”

“Let you go ! where on earth to ? Into the

street, that people might point at you with their fingers?"

"We have our own money, father," cried Nadia excitedly; "my fortune is still in your hands. I am quite ready to give half of it to Sacha, and then we can always work."

"Why, what nonsense is this? You want to have your own money! Don't you think it quite enough that Sacha has spent all her fortune with her lover. Will you do the same?"

And Sergius Petrovich began to use such coarse words that Nadia broke off the conversation, and hurried out of the room.

But things could not have gone on much longer in this way if help had not come in a quite unexpected way. Prince Toumanoff happened to meet the two sisters in the public garden, and went up to talk to them.

"I knew that you were here," he said, turning towards Sacha, "and wished to tell you that if I can be of any use to you, you may depend upon me."

These words, which quite overwhelmed Nadia and her sister, were spoken in a quiet, almost wooden tone. Not one muscle of his unexpressive face moved, and his eyes looked straight before him, as if talking with himself.

"We are perfect strangers to each other, certainly," he went on; "but we all belong to the same party, and are bound to help one another. As I hear you

have already—already parted—well, in a word, if you want——” He broke off suddenly, not knowing how to finish the sentence. “I’ll call upon you, as it may be disagreeable to you to be seen talking to me here in public.”

Toumanoff kept his word. On the following day he called upon them. This narrow-minded man instantly grasped the unbearableness of his wife’s position in her father’s house. His straightforward nature invoked confidence, and Nadia opened her heart to him.

“Why should you not come to me?” he asked, in his plain, lifeless way; “it would be very easy for me to help you in this way. I consider it my duty to do all I can for you and Alexandra Sergeevna, not because she is my wife”—here a faint smile played round his mouth—“but because we are comrades and fellow-workers in a holy cause. Therefore I offer you to come and live with me. I am poor, you know, but you won’t be too exacting, I suppose. Alexandra Sergeevna and I shall remain strangers to each other as long as she wishes it; but living with me it will be easier for you to see your own set than it would be at home.”

The sisters immediately accepted this offer, however strange it appeared to them. Sergius Petrovitch fumed and raged, hardly knowing why, and uttered some very cynical remarks about the relations between the prince and his wife. Yet Nadia suc-

ceeded in convincing him that this issue was the best—in fact, the only possible one. Who would have the right to scoff at the wife living under her husband's roof? And he himself, a liberal man, would he not be able to silence the scoffers, and prove to them that his daughter's position as princess was beyond all reproach?

One of the first persons whom Nadia met at Toumanoff's was Neradovitch. He had now entirely parted with his official mask. He had been dismissed from school without knowing whether the public authorities suspected something, or whether he simply did not suit the new director. It was not so much the loss of his place which worried him,—he did not care about his work, and did not want the money just now,—but the discharge looked like a threat, and it provoked him into imprudences. He now entered upon an underground existence, with enforced change of dwellings, counterfeited passports, and mysterious journeys all over Russia. The deeper he dug his subterranean way the higher he rose on another battlefield, becoming impossible to catch for the official world. He had acquired power and strength enough to enjoy the strange contrast between his low position in the legal world and the bewitching allurements which surrounded his person on the wrong side of this same world. He became the leading man in the whole south of Russia. A long experience had given him a rare knowledge of

the people, and a great facility to adapt his language to their understanding.

Nadia talked quite frankly to him about all her lost illusions. He listened attentively, though with a scoffing air.

"Yes, yes," he answered; "there is a great deal of truth in it. But *I* did not send you out there, you remember, certainly. And what do you think of doing now?—forsake your youthful dreams and become a respectable young lady?"

"What I am going to *do*? Yes, that's the question. Do, act, and not only talk! But on this point there is no hope at all for me, I fear."

"There you are wrong; we don't cross our hands idly, we live and think. Who knows if we shall not soon want you?"

There he broke suddenly off, fancying these mysterious hints sufficient for the beginning. Yet all that she saw at Toumanoff's seemed to prove that the time for action was drawing near, and that the work was now carried on in quite a different spirit from the time when she listened to his fiery speeches in the house of Pokrovsky.

Among the young people who visited at her brother-in-law's there was an excessively ugly fellow, whose head seemed to start off from his clumsy trunk, with a perfectly colourless, almost faded face, in which a pair of restless dark eyes glowed with a strange fire. A large curved mouth and nose, like

the beak of a bird, betrayed sufficiently his Eastern extraction. This silent, hard-looking man, named Rafael Goldstein, was a most disinterested young man. His personal poverty was perfectly indifferent to him. He possessed a great deal of eloquence, and his fiery speeches were sharper and more convincing than those of most other people. He developed his wild, unruly thoughts with a most marvellous composure—as if there was nothing in the bloody, violent deeds he was clamouring for incessantly.

Once Nadia tried to refute him, but he answered her immediately, in the most excited way,—

“What do you say? Don’t you know that we are utterly lost? Do you fancy that soft speeches about liberal nonsense will save us? We have only one strength, and it consists in our never drawing back before any crime; do you hear?—neither before crime nor vengeance.”

That same evening Nadia, having remained alone with Neradovitch, asked him quite resolutely whither he was leading them.

“I am no longer a child,” she said; “I have the right to know whether you are leading us on to that slaughter, of which Goldstein raves, and which makes me feel faint and sick whenever I think of it, or whether we are condemned to remain here for ever without doing anything.”

“But I told you more than once that we are not sitting here idly without doing anything,” he an-

swered composedly; "yet, if you don't believe *me*, how can you ask me to trust *you*?"

"You know me sufficiently, I fancy, not to doubt my readiness to go wherever you send me," she cried vehemently; "but I shall only do it on one condition—that you tell me quite frankly where I am sent. I am ready to sacrifice myself, but I want to know what for!"

"You don't know what you are asking for, Nadia; you have no idea what duties will devolve on you as soon as our aims and means are unveiled to you. Therefore whoever joins us is never allowed to leave us."

A strange ring of tenderness resounded in these words of Neradovitch, but they only served to provoke her stubbornness. So he resolved to give way, knowing that sooner or later it would have to come to that.

"Well," he said slowly, "I'll tell you all, but you must know before, that from that very moment you will have no more family ties, no personal, independent will. No one ever belonged to us by halves; whatever we may ask of you, you will have to remain with us for ever."

Nadia on hearing these words remained silent with drooping head. He opened the window and looked out into the dark night; the steps of some rare passer-by were audible.

"Look here," he said, "the town seems very quiet,

does it not? yet an underground work is going on here and everywhere, and some time or other, quite unexpectedly, the whole world which now surrounds you will crumble away like a rotten building. And it will crumble away because the ground on which it was built, and which people deemed so hard and steady, has been changed into a roaring sea. We have worked hard, and are convinced that it must be, for the people have got coagulated like the soil, and have lost the consciousness of their strength. But the moment is drawing near when they will waken up to their consciousness, and shake off all that weighs them down. And is it not a tough and mighty work to teach them this lesson? The work is still far behind, certainly, but every passing year brings us new allies."

"Only I don't see the first steps to it," said Nadia shyly.

"The first steps have been taken long ago. Though we do not work, all of us, nor at the same time, we assemble and organize ourselves wherever we can. We have many adherents here, and have already sent many messengers off to other towns. So now prepare and keep in readiness to take your part in the movement."

A few days later he told her that her great wish was at last to be fulfilled, and that she was going to be sent to Moscow, to work there in the manufactories.

This news filled her heart with an ecstasy of

delight. A month later they all migrated to Moscow, and settled down in a small house close to Miasnitzky. But, to her despair, the promised work seemed to be continually receding before her, like a shadow. She knew the place where they assembled, and kept their seal and papers; she assisted at their meetings, and listened to long speeches about the erection of workshops, and their success in the manufactories; but no sort of work was ever entrusted to her. Everybody seemed to shrink from her; the women especially talked in a contemptible way of her youth and insufficient strength. The cause of this estrangement was Neradovitch himself. He lacked courage to expose her to the dangers of the "active work." "Her soft and slender hands are not fit for coarse work," he used to say. But poor Nadia suffered dreadfully under the cruel jests of all these women, especially of Varia, who had always detested her, and who was now one of the most zealous supporters of the extreme party, called "Bountaref." She even went so far as to rise against Neradovitch and accuse him of tarrying and losing his time. Goldstein took up this accusation, and their meetings were very stormy.

If Nadia did not meet with much sympathy from her new friends, she, on the other side, felt none for them. Her eyes began to open, and she now saw the wrong side of the medal, which Neradovitch had so carefully hid from her. She felt disgusted with the

coarse talk, the careless dressing, that met her on all sides; the other girls, observing this, gave her all sorts of nicknames, as "the muslin lady," "the white-handed girl," "the princess," etc., and Varia Pokrovsky once asked her before the rest how she could thrive in their plebeian circle? She might, however, have got accustomed to these outward things if her very inmost convictions had not been scoffed at: they called her an "ideal girl, with sentimental nonsense fit only for schoolgirls," etc.

"You are really too soft-hearted," Goldstein once said to her; "sobbing and whimpering won't save us; we are not nervous old ladies. Do you think we sacrifice ourselves because our people are unhappy? Oh, no! simply because they are strong and unconscious of their slumbering strength. Now we are trying to push the knowledge of it into these damned block-heads; and when this is done, then all will be well."

However, in spite of their repeating daily that the triumph of force is the highest law of human progress, Nadia saw how these very persons grew weak and powerless as soon as they tried hard work, how they withdrew from the manufactories after two or three days of manual labour, complaining of sore hands and rheumatism in their backs. All their attempts took a pitiful end: no workshops were erected, the propagation of books among workmen was done in a very slovenly, stingy way, and all their efforts to become acquainted with them personally proved

the impossibility of expressing themselves in their language and according to their intellect. Even Neradovitch began to feel low-spirited and cast down.

Once returning home, tired and out of sorts, he burst out into a long and passionate speech.

"What are we, after all?" he exclaimed; "nothing but galley slaves. Are we really obliged to force happiness upon these coarse boors? Well, if they won't understand that without our help they can't raise themselves above their present position as working brutes, let them go to the devil! Shall we, perhaps, put our neck into the noose to rid them of their burdens?"

"This is the natural result of your alluring system of peaceful propaganda," said Goldstein sarcastically. Now *I* say—the hatchet and the red cock; there's the best remedy."

These words, spoken in full earnest, made a deep impressiom on Nadia. Thus did the leaders talk of the poor: "coarse boors, working brutes!" this was that fiery love, ready to sacrifice life and everything to them; and then those last words, "hatchet, red cock!" If she had not had her own deep devotion to sustain her, she would have sunk under the burden of this revelation. She began to look out for a meeting with Neradovitch to declare most peremptorily that if she did not get a real task set to her, a task worthy of her strength and love, she had decided to withdraw,

and not to submit any longer to those eternal dawdlings, those coarse speeches and cruel jests. She would return to her native town and look out for work there.

Poor girl, she did not foresee the result of this meeting. One day she found him alone in the assembly room reclining leisurely on the sofa. She immediately put her request to him. He refused peremptorily.

"Then I'll leave Moscow."

"No, you won't," he screamed; "I shan't let you go. Do you not understand why I won't let you off? why I don't send you where others go? why I try to protect you against every danger?"

If a thunderbolt had struck Nadia she could not have been more bewildered than she was at this violent outburst of passionate love; she had had no idea of the real state of his feelings, and did not even quite take in the first words he spoke, but when the deep glow of his fiery eyes and the burning passion of his speech at last opened her eyes to the truth, she seemed to rise higher and higher above him, and an expression of such deep, freezing contempt stole over her face that his eyes fell before hers. He felt that he had been ridiculous in her sight, and the awakening feeling of shame and self-abasement spoke louder than his passion. He knew that his power over the young girl was lost for ever.

"Then it was for this that you lured me on; this

was the true meaning of your high-flown words !” she cried, covering her face with her hands.

He tried to approach her.

“ I have offended you,” he said, in a strangely tender and insinuating tone.

Her self-possession immediately returned.

“ You have not offended me,” she answered proudly ; “ what is ridiculous and bad can’t offend. I only regret the trust I put in you. Why did I not remain in my own home ? why did not I bear patiently all that I had to bear from my father, even if it had been ten times worse ? ”

With these words she left the room, and did not return to it for several days. She reflected on what remained for her to do ; it was even impossible for her to talk the matter over with her sister and brother-in-law, for they had already left Moscow several weeks ago to go and work in the manufactories. At last she resolved to remain at Moscow, but to break entirely with her party, and find out some work for herself. On the third day she walked down to the meeting room, to notify her resolution to them, for, according to her ideas, her rupture ought to be public. On the way thither she met with Toumanoff.

“ What luck ! ” he cried, drawing her into the nearest porch. “ The police are down upon us. Three of our friends are arrested ; the others under survey. Neradovitch, Sacha, and some others have fled. I was just going to look for you to tell you that I am

also leaving Moscow. If you stay here, you must find out some other lodgings ; mine are not safe any longer.

So she stood there, alone and forsaken, thrust out of all her wonted surroundings by the iron hand of destiny. Her pride did not allow her to return to her father. She still possessed some few rubles ; so she hired a small and cheap room in one of the hotels in town, and tried to find some needlework, with which to support herself. Here she was found by Anna Grigorievna, who had chanced to alight at the same hotel.

CHAPTER XI.

IT is now time for us to return to Biälastolby. It was five or six days after the evening we last described there. Volodia had just returned from Nikolsky, where he had gone to bring an invitation to Elena Michailovna. He had ridden over on his fine chestnut, hoping thus to create a greater impression on the ladies.

"How glad I am we made the acquaintance of the Ordinzoffs," he said, on meeting Nadia in the hall. Elena Michailovna is so charming and sweet, and her house is a real gem. She is coming here to-morrow evening; so you will at last have a companion of your own age." And he went on telling her what a charming reception he had met with; but he did not tell her what had especially bewitched him there, though the glow on his face and the sparkle in his eyes betrayed his secret sufficiently, namely, the step-daughter of Elena Michailovna, Jenny Ordinzoff.

It was not to be wondered at if everybody fell in love with this girl of fifteen years. Everything was still unfinished in her. She looked like a spring bud ready to unfold, or like a sketch over which the

master's hand still lingered lovingly. Slender and straight like a young fir-tree, yet supple like a fresh twig, she seemed to partake of the nature of spring, blending its tender loveliness with its budding strength. All in her was struggling heavenwards, just as the young plants stretch themselves towards the sun. In all her movements there was some elastic grace, as if she hardly knew herself that she moved, while there was not the slightest trace of that angular sharpness which is so often visible in half grown-up girls. Yet it would have been difficult to tell wherein consisted her real beauty. She had no classical features, nor a perfect figure. Hers was not that pale, transparent beauty, which seems eternally lighted up by the milky, sickly light of the moon. On the contrary, life and health pervaded her whole being, though she was such a light and graceful creature, that she seemed rather to glide than to walk over this beautiful earth, which appeared to her a paradise to live in. In spite of her long, black eye-lashes and her thick, dark hair, which fell in two heavy tresses down to her heels, her vivacious, bright face possessed the softest, creamy skin, on which a tender flush came and went ; for the dark colour of her hair was not the dull black of the South. Her soft, silky tresses had a warm, metallic glow, as if the rays of the evening sun were continually playing on them. And these sun-rays had lighted up her small face ever since her earliest childhood. It seemed

to have been created to chase away all the sad and gloomy thoughts of those who happened to look at her. It had no settled, determined expression; every new feeling was quickly reflected on it, just as the light breeze ruffles the quiet surface of the sea. Smiles came naturally to her half-opened, rosy lips, as if the skilled hand of a master had been touching the chords of some instrument.

Volodia had left home in a state of great excitement. He had pictured to himself every detail of the coming visit, but reality hardly ever answers to our expectations. After having passed the village, he put his horse to a quicker pace, and soon found himself before a large manor-house with three floors, straight Dorian columns, and two wings, stretching forth in a half circle, somewhat like the wings of the Austrian two-headed eagle. This place was an old hereditary estate, which had belonged to the rich family of the Counts of Panitzine. The old story of Russian noblemen living so much above their means that the largest fortune does not suffice was once more verified here, and Nikolsky was put to the market on account of debts, and bought by Ordinzoff. Elena Michailovna, who was a woman of taste, had done her best to soften down some of its official grandeur. Beautiful flower-beds surrounded the fountain in the middle of the courtyard; large linen canopies, supported by white stone pillars, were stretched over the terrace, to protect it against

the sun, and the terrace itself was filled with the choicest hot-house plants, whose soft, blooming verdure broke agreeably the coldness of the too correct building. The look of the house displeased Volodia, and his timidity grew with it. At the gate he met a boy, whom he immediately stopped to ask him whether the Barina was at home, and to tell him to hold his horse for him. But the boy only gazed at him with startled eyes and started off, giving a sort of strange whistle.

"Then I must ride straight up to the house," he thought, "alight myself, and call somebody out of the ante-room." But this proceeding seemed impossible, from the cold and uncourteous look which the house wore in his eyes.

So he alighted and looked about him, where to find somebody to take care of his horse. He saw no one, and his perplexed face must have looked rather comical, for behind him resounded a very hearty laugh, and almost at the same moment a large Danish dog came down upon him, barking loudly and showing its white teeth. Volodia's position was becoming critical, for the frightened horse began to plunge and to rear. Happily for him, salvation was not far off.

"Jack, Jack! be quiet, you naughty fellow!" said a sweet young voice, half smothered with laughter; and a lovely girl, draped in a black frock with white stripes, ran up to him. But no! it was no girl, but a

fairy, so lightly and airily did she move, hardly touching the soil with her feet. The dog immediately quieted down, and began to fawn upon its mistress. She bent down to caress his soft head, while her eyes looked somewhat mockingly at Volodia. A moment's silence ensued, which seemed an eternity to him. An unconquerable shyness overcame him, though he did not take his eyes off the young girl, who did not seem at all abashed at this strange meeting.

"You want to see mamma, I suppose?" she asked, seeing that he remained silent. The mocking expression disappeared from her face, and a soft, almost tender smile played round her lips, while her clever little head quickly guessed that this shy young man could be no other than her neighbour from Biälastolby, whom she had often heard mentioned by Tomiline and Boroffsky.

"Yes; is Elena Micharlovna at home?" stammered Volodia, frowning out of sheer confusion. "You are her daughter,—or rather her step-daughter,—are you not?" he went on haltingly and shyly, while the horse was continually stamping the soil with its hoofs and tearing at the bridle.

"Certainly, you guess quite rightly," answered Jenny, with a tinge of mockery in her voice. "And you can't find your way to the entrance," she went on mercilessly; but suddenly changing her tone as she saw a still deeper flush mount to Volodia's brow, she

added, "I'll show you the way. Your horse is rather unmanageable, I think," she suddenly exclaimed, turning to the horse, which seemed to interest her a great deal.

Jenny was passionately fond of horses, and could not reconcile herself to the fact that there were no lady's horses at Nikolsky.

"Not at all. He is most quiet—a perfect lamb," answered Volodia, stroking the neck of his favourite. In such difficult positions as the present one, young people gladly turn to animals, as to silent and convenient allies.

"What a splendid horse! What's its name?" she asked, beginning also to stroke the horse, hardly knowing why.

"Soliman."

And it suddenly struck him that this historical name was perfectly ridiculous, but Jenny already thought of something else.

"Why do you come and see us on horseback? This is not the custom here, you see. And if I had not been here, my Jack might have received you very ungraciously."

They were standing face to face, on either side of the horse. Jenny's vivacious eyes had already discovered that this shy young man was no dunce at all, and that his great timidity only prevented him from showing any joy at their meeting.

"Feodor Vassilievitch Tomiline often talked to me

about your Biälastolby," she began again, in order to make him understand that she knew who he was. He quickly understood her intention.

"Feodor Vassilievitch Tomiline told me that Elena Micharlovna would allow me to call upon her."

"So she does, and so do I," she answered roguishly ; and bending down over the horse's neck, she hid her face laughingly in its mane.

Volodia now began to recover his composure sufficiently to look at the young girl before him, and to take in that she was a real living human being and no fairy, after all. He admired the charming way in which the black hat with the long feather was poised on her small head, saw how prettily the heavy plaits of her hair rested on her slender shoulders, how elegantly the folds of her dress fell round her figure, and how a leathern belt encircled her small waist. The dress did not reach to the ground, and his quick glance immediately discovered a pair of small, seemingly very restless, feet.

"Let us go," she suddenly exclaimed ; "why are we standing here ? But I forgot to ask you if your name is not Vladimir Alexandrovitch ?"

"And yours Eugenia Alexandrovna ?" he answered, in a sudden fit of gaiety. "You see we are not such strangers to each other as we first thought. You are going to spend the whole summer here, are you not ?"

"I think so ; and I confess freely that I was rather afraid of the prospect."

"Why?"

"Because I fancied this place a perfect desert, surrounded as it is on all sides by endless steppes—in a word, I expected to find an unpeopled wilderness. But I quickly discovered that I was wrong, and now I love it."

The young man involuntarily glanced at the manor-house, which looked as official as a tshinovnik in his uniform.

"You wonder at it," she said, following his eyes. "Well, at first I thought it as stiff and formal as those old ladies in their hoops, of whom we have lots in the gallery; but you get very quickly accustomed to it; to the old ladies as well as to the manor-house; and then you forget all about it on account of the garden, which, with its lovely old lime-trees, must be quite splendid in summer."

"You belong, perhaps, to those who are always satisfied with their surroundings," he said, now feeling quite at ease with her.

"Perhaps so," she answered, laughing.

At this moment a boy appeared in the courtyard, dressed in a strange green jacket, adorned with braid and buttons. It was the classical cassock of every landed proprietor, whose livery had only been a little modified according to the claims of the present age.

"Vassia," called the young girl, "take the horse to the stable. Is mamma at home?"

"She may be for aught I know," answered the boy, taking hold of the bridle.

The young people walked up to the house, chattering like old acquaintances. There Jenny called one of the servants out of the hall and ordered him to announce Volodia to her mother.

This being done, the youthful fairy took leave of her new friend and disappeared within the wicket that led into the garden. A feeling of past grandeur overcame Volodia when he entered the large hall, where a broad staircase, branching off in two windings, led up to the second floor. But he had not much time for observation, for the footman returned in a moment, saying that Elena Michailovna would be very glad to receive him. He found her in a small morning-room, the only one in the house in which the old-fashioned furniture had been removed, to make place for soft and low arm-chairs, covered with pale blue chintz. It was her favourite retreat, being bright and comfortable at the same time. As the young man entered the room, she rose slowly, pointing to a seat near her. All her movements were graceful, and had something in them of the even, solemn rhythm of classical poetry. Though she was already twenty-seven years of age, she had kept a rare, almost childlike freshness of complexion. Her features were fine and transparent, and her face knew how to vary its expression according to the feelings she wanted to show. She had soft, full lips and strangely

blue eyes that gazed intently and took in everything. Only one thing slightly spoiled this lovely face—the straight, proud brows and the high forehead, from which the girlish tranquillity of thoughts had long disappeared, if they had ever existed there.

The reception of Elena Michailovna, and especially the soft sound of her singularly even voice, made Volodia feel as if cold water had been poured down over his back. It was a strange impression produced by this voice ; it was excessively soft and melodious, but at the same time so quiet and indifferent that it seemed as if its possessor could never love, hate, or get excited. Volodia, of course, did not account clearly for this, but in the presence of this woman who exercised such a power over herself and perhaps over others, he felt strangely disturbed, as in the presence of a mysterious, unknown power. But Elena Michailovna knew how to conquer more restive natures than that of Volodia, and before long he found himself chatting gaily with her, only saying, perhaps, a little more than he intended. Yet, though she talked so pleasantly, he did not feel at ease with her, and glanced continually at the door, hoping to see a certain black dress appear in it. But he had already spent half an hour with Elena Michailovna, and Jenny had not yet made her appearance. The great lady listened to him and encouraged him, just as if she took a real interest in his conversation ; per-

haps she wanted to sound him and extort something from him. But Volodia, guessing her thoughts, mentally ejaculated, "Oh, no, I shan't confide my most sacred thoughts to this futile, worldly lady, that she may laugh at them." The conversation happening to fall on his brother Dmitry, he told her of his speedy arrival.

"I am very glad," she said, and a hardly perceptible smile lit up her eyes. "Do you know that I have known your brother for ever so long?" she added, with a quick, inquiring glance at Volodia.

It seemed that the answer she read on his face quieted her apprehensions ; at least she talked quite freely on, and listened indifferently to his flattering description of Dmitry's mind and faculties.

In the meantime lunch was served, and Elena Micharlovna took the young man with her to the dining-room, where, to his great joy, he found Jenny, in company with her old governess, Miss Finch. He was, however, deceived in his expectation of seeing her take up the broken thread of their conversation ; the young girl was quite transformed. When her stepmother presented Volodia to her, she answered curtly that she had already seen him in the courtyard, and then ensconced herself in perfect silence, only answering the questions that were put to her. She devoted herself entirely to the manager of the farm, a rather clumsy pupil of some agricultural academy, asking him various questions about the

different systems of ploughs. She did not seem hurt at all at the churlish answers she received, and which seemed to imply that he had nothing to do with her, the farm being his chief business. Thus Volodia's pleasant impressions disappeared one after the other, and he left immediately after lunch. However, the farther he got from the castle, the more readily he forgot the unpleasant occurrences of the morning, and a long row of sweet remembrances crowded in his brain. More than once he laughed aloud, without knowing why, and when he reached Biälastolby, he deemed this visit the most charming thing imaginable, though he did not say it quite openly to Nadia.

On the following day Elena Michailovna drove over, bringing Jenny with her, as she had promised. She knew how to gain the heart of Anna Grigorievna, though the two ladies were so different from each other. Nadia was at first quite rebellious and refused to appear, saying she did not want to make the acquaintance of an elegant lady from Petersburg, nor that of such a doll as her step-daughter must be. But even she succumbed to the witchery of the quiet, insinuating grace of Elena Michailovna, who did not show the slightest sign of curiosity, nor of condescension. The grand lady of Nikolsky knew how to be charming.

"I hope you will come and visit us in a friendly sort of way," she said to Nadia, these words sounding

like the sweetest request,—“just like a good neighbour, and as often as possible, provided you don't find Jenny too much of a child.” In the meantime Jenny finished what her mother had begun.

What mostly struck Nadia in her was the entire absence of all stiffness and coldness. Her natural charm was not only in her movements, but in all that she said or did. Nadia had never seen a young being so full of life and gaiety. Neither sorrow nor wickedness had yet touched her ; and while her soul unfolded to all impressions, she took them up quickly and readily.

As the carriage dashed up to the door, Volodia rushed out to meet the guests, though, in his inmost heart, he trembled at the thought of this second meeting. What if Jenny were to meet him with studied, yea, inimical coldness. But his fears were superfluous. Both ladies held out their hands to him in the same way, yet the sharp eyes of Volodia detected a shade of raillery in Jenny's eyes, as well as a tinge of condescension in Elena's bow.

When Nadia took Jenny out into the garden, Volodia felt it impossible to stay behind, and hurried out after them. He soon overtook them, assuring them that he knew the old garden much better than Nadia, and would be a much safer guide to lead them to the place whence there was the lovely view over the wood and ravine. Having delivered this speech, he relapsed, however, into silence, and followed them

about with drooping head, not knowing what to say. His eyes always reverted to the sweet face of Jenny, who seemed to have got a new witchery from the different beauty of Nadia. Her vivacious face entirely lacked that deep, almost rigid expression which life had stamped so early on the tender, almost child-like features of Nadia. She was the living personification of spring. Life sparkled in her eyes as the rays of the sun sparkle in the transparent drops of the morning dew. The adoring eyes of the young man rested upon her, wandering from her small, elegant head to the graceful curve of her slender shoulders, covered with the heavy weight of her tresses, down to the tip of her small leather boots, peeping out under her skirts.

Jenny now suddenly flashed round upon him, saying,—

“Your visit yesterday, and especially your lovely horse, awakened within me the wish to ride ; and as if on purpose, Tomiline dined with us yesterday, so I besought him to give me a horse. He is a great connoisseur, you know. Would you consent to ride sometimes with me ?”

Volodia was, of course, delighted with this offer, and his tongue began again to get loosened. He felt as he had never done before in the presence of a young girl. Strange to say, he even forgot to wish to *develope* her, as he and his fellow-students had so often done with other girls ; nor did he remember the

severe laws of the present age, which forbid young men to be youthful and gay.

"Peter Nicolarevitch writes to tell me that he is coming here about the middle of June," said Elena Micharlovna to Anna Grigorievna, as she took leave of her. "He is very dissatisfied with Dmitry Alexandrovitch for refusing to serve any longer under him. Only fancy," she added, with a most bewitching smile, "he even wants me to persuade him not to leave service."

"I do not correspond with Peter Nicolarevitch," answered Anna Grigorievna, somewhat drily, for these words of Elena Micharlovna had raked up long-forgotten sorrows; "but if you could exercise some influence on my son in this matter, I should be grateful to you."

* Elena Micharlovna had said these words as if by chance, but in reality because she wanted to see how much the old lady knew of the past. In the meantime, though she had made rather a favourable impression on her, Anna Grigorievna knew perfectly well that it was not without some weighty reason that the rich widow had thought fit to make her acquaintance.

"She did not take the trouble of calling," thought the old lady, "only because my brother-in-law is trustee to her step-daughter."

CHAPTER XII.

A CONTINUAL exchange of visits now began to take place between Biälástolby and Nikolsky ; Elena Micharlovna evidently enjoyed the intercourse with her neighbours, not to talk of Volodia ; even Nadia delighted in the friendship of Jenny. Her whole being seemed to unfold and brighten, and with every passing day her hatred of mankind and the world in general seemed to diminish. She observed it herself, and almost blushed at this change, but was at the same time obliged to confess that her present surroundings were much more congenial to her than those in which she had spent the last two years. Feodor Vassilievitch Tomiline, whom she often saw, contributed a great deal to this change. Never had a spring seemed so delightful to her : it was lovely weather, for though it was only the beginning of May, the meadows had already begun to put on their bright dress, on which budding flowers here and there glittered. The cytusus were sending forth their young shoots, and the reddish buds in the wood were quickly changing into a soft, succulent green. The days were

dry, almost warm, and the sky so cloudless that the farmers began to tremble for their seeds.

One day Nadia walked down to the village, where she had not been for some days. It was no busy time as yet; the women worked a little in their kitchen-gardens, and some of the peasants were preparing the furrows for the wheat. In the streets crowds of boys and girls were playing. Nadia knew them almost all personally, and through her intercourse with them the peasants had almost lost their usual distrust of their masters. She was going to pay a visit to the priest, but was stopped several times by different women, who wanted to put questions to her, for they knew that it was only due to her intercession that Anna Grigorievna had sent for the doctor at C——, when there had been some hard cases of fever in the village.

As she walked on, a young man came towards her; he had a linen cap on his long, tangled hair, and a smooth, almost beardless face. It was the eldest son of Father Sosima, the village priest. He served as a land surveyor at the public meetings.

"Are you coming to see us, Nadia Sergeevna?" he asked, bowing to her. "My father is not at home; he drove over to see the priest at Nikolsky."

"I wished very much to see you," said Nadia, giving him her hand, "in order to talk some school matters over with you, and to ask after your friend; do you know anything about him?"

"Really I don't know," answered Vassili; "you had better ask Boroffsky when you see him."

Nadia had made the acquaintance of this young man in a rather odd way. She had met him one day in the school about three weeks after her arrival at Biälastolby, and he had told her that he had just got a letter which he was to hand over to her. It proved to be from Neradovitch. Having heard that she had left Moscow, he wanted to give her news of all their mutual friends, and ended with the somewhat ironical question, How her new life suited her? This letter quieted Nadia about the fate of many persons whom she knew, but it gave her an uneasy feeling of not being quite free. This episode brought her in contact with the whole family of Father Sosima. The young man was the only individual at Biälastolby who could fully sympathise with all her feelings for the people. Brought up entirely in the country as he had been, it was not only out of books that he knew the peasants, and was a better judge of their ways than many of those who looked down upon them from their imaginary heights.

"Well, and as for our school, I think we ought to wait for the arrival of Dmitry Alexandrovitch. Anna Grigorievna will never consent to dismiss the present teacher, though she never agreed with him. Her younger son has no influence over her, I fancy."

This put Nadia in mind of her having once asked Volodia to talk school matters over with his mother.

He had showed a great deal of interest about the school, had promised his help, and then forgotten all about it.

"But I do not know Dmitry Alexandrovitch as yet," she answered, raising her eyebrows; "could not your father say a word on his behalf?"

"My father!" he echoed mockingly; "what does he care about the school? The present teacher is a quiet sort of man; what more does he want?"

The young men had hardly uttered these words when a small droshky appeared in the chief street of the village. They both at once recognised in it the elderly, but healthy, figure of Father Sosima, dressed in a very dusty cassock. He stopped near some peasants, and began to talk to them.

"Father talks to them about their ploughing," said Vassily, a little embarrassed.

The droshky now quickly approached the place where the young girl was standing. The priest greeted her courteously, doffing his lamb's-wool cap.

"The peasants have been complaining about my aunt, have they not?" asked Nadia.

"Gracious God! how could they? What have they to complain of?" cried the priest. "They ought to pray for her excellency; that's what they ought to do."

"But they have been talking with her themselves about the manor-ground."

"Oh, about the ground," exclaimed Father Sosima

indifferently ; " have they concluded an arrangement with our lady ? At last ! But that's charming, of course."

" But, as their father confessor, you ought to talk the matter over with them."

" I ? Oh, certainly not ; they know very well what they are about. Won't you come and have a cup of tea with us, Nadeshda Sergeïevna ? It will be ready in a moment."

But Nadia declined the offered invitation, and walked slowly on in the direction of the town. The church was situated at the end of the village, on the border of the ravine, and towered high above all the roofs of the houses. Here the road led down under the hill, and from its height the eye roamed freely over the whole plain. Only to the right, towards the manor-house, the ravine fell steeply off, and behind it rose the old wood, its gloomy oak branches gleaming through the soft verdure of the young leaves, while here and there in the far-off distance appeared the declivity of a small hill, like a rare and idle wave on the smooth surface of a bay. To the right and to the left stretched long rows of splendid, bluish corn. A deep stillness pervaded the air, and the feathery stalks rose straight and dense like impenetrable walls.

The young girl had hardly left the village behind her, when the deep silence of the steppe closed around her. Nowhere a human voice, nowhere the

rolling of wheels, nor the noise of clattering hoofs. The mother steppe, in its loneliness, was preparing itself for a rich and gorgeous harvest. Above the pale, blue sky, cold and transparent, like a real spring sky, with small chalk-like clouds on it, the swallows, intruding everywhere, swept over the earth, hardly touching it with their wings, and the larks, starting up from the fields, soared high up in the air, disappearing in the misty distance. It seemed as if a whole century could sweep over this green steppe, and yet leave the image of this broad and blessed fertility untouched for ever.

But the peace of the steppe did not speak to the young girl's heart. Through its deep silence she fancied she heard sobs and tears; its abundance and vastness only talked to her of those whom she looked upon as the bereft and wronged ones. It seemed to her as if those who cultivated this fertile steppe were put off with a handful of earth, while they exhausted all their strength in the service of strangers. And there, just before her, near the stockyard, was the fallow-land, with its filthy weeds, which the peasants thought they could not do without, and about which they quarrelled unceasingly with the proprietor. And all this only that the Koretzky family might enjoy all the comforts of life. Though Nadia was deeply conscious of the injustice of this order of things, yet she felt no anger with her aunt. She had grown up amid all the privileges of serfdom, she

thought, and could therefore not be made answerable for those hereditary prejudices; but her eldest son, that clever Dmitry, who had received a first-rate education and was now travelling through Europe; and then Volodia, that fiery Radical, who had never yet raised his little finger in favour of his peasants!—they were guilty! It seemed to her as if she ought not to go on living with these people, nor to enjoy their hospitality, in order not to partake of their responsibilities. Was it not a treason to have allowed herself to be adopted by them? She had never protested against their principles, and had lived in peace with all her surroundings; this was a treason to the people!

All these thoughts whirled through her brain while she walked farther and farther on, without observing that the sky was quickly darkening, and that the shadows in the fields were growing blacker and broader.

“Nadeshda Sergeïevna!” suddenly exclaimed a well-known voice quite close to her ear. She had not even observed that a very neat, small tarantass had stopped near to her, out of which Boroffsky now jumped. “Nadeshda Sergeïevna! where are you going? Look at the sky, how overcast it is! Rain is sure to come down in a moment,—or do the realities of life exist as little for you as my troika does, which you have not yet seen?”

He held out his hand to her, told her that he was

going to Biälastolby, and asked her to return with him.

This unexpected meeting excited Nadia a great deal, for she could not but confess to herself that this man, whom she ought to hate, possessed a strange attraction for her, and excited her inquisitiveness in a high degree. Their conversation usually turned on the most trivial topics, yet she always felt as if obliged to tell him her most hidden thoughts, much against her own will. She had never met with a man who, after Neradovitch, awoke such an uncontrollable fear in her heart. Was Boroffsky conscious of this or not? Nadia always fancied she read an expression of solemn self-confidence on his face.

"I saw Elena Micharlovna yesterday evening," he said, among other things; "she perfectly raved about you; and she is not of those who are easily won over."

"I ought to be very grateful for having won her good graces," said Nadia, in a mocking tone.

"Please don't take up this railing tone with me, Nadeshda Sergejevna, for it is quite superfluous. I mention Elena Micharlovna to you because you are two very clever women, standing high above the usual influence of education, birth, and surroundings. This is a very rare thing, and therefore I thought you might perhaps suit each other."

"She seems to belong to those for whom doubt and hesitation do not exist,—so at least it seems to me."

"And so it is, indeed. The world, you see, is divided into two distinct parts—those who lead, and those who are led. What leads these first? Nothing but the mass of absurd prejudices which compose modern life. These change continually, as in a kaleidoscope. Believe me, in this our present time there are very few people quite free of them, even in those circles to which you belonged a few months ago."

Having said these unexpected words, he suddenly flashed round upon her, staring hard at her face, yet a kind smile hovered on his lips.

"Even in those circles, the ideals before which they bow down are a sort of idols. Now, in order to live independent of a leader, it is necessary to crush those idols, and to scatter those visions which prejudice creates for the crowd. Whoever does this belongs to the small circle of elected ones, on whatever side he stands."

Boroffsky seldom allowed himself to be carried away by his enthusiasm, but now his eyes sparkled, those eyes that used to stare so hard at everything, and his whole form expanded, as if he had been talking in public, and not before a young girl whom he wanted very much to convert, but who smiled somewhat incredulously.

"And therefore belonging to those select few, as we do, both of us,—I always hated modesty,—it is perfectly incomprehensible to me how you could de-

vote yourself to such a hopeless business. How can you, so clever, so intelligent, allow yourself to be taken in by the hollow phrases of your partisans?"

"How dare you talk to me in this way?" she cried angrily, looking straight into his eyes. But this time she saw that it would be no easy matter to convince this man, for he did not belong to those whose eyes fell before an angry glance.

"With what right?" he repeated quietly. "Well, I am twice as old as you are; and then, we are two congenial minds, as I told you once. But we have been chatting here so long that the rain has overtaken us."

As he said these words some heavy rain-drops began to fall, and clouds of black dust rose on the high road in the direction of the town, forerunner of the coming thunderstorm.

"Never mind, we are hardly two versts from home."

"I tell you, we are going to have a violent shower directly. Can't you get rid of your prejudices for ten short minutes and accept the shelter of my carriage?"

Nadia complied with his wish and sat down in the carriage. He wrapped his rug carefully round her. As they approached the ravine, they heard behind them the clattering of hoofs on the bridge, and a moment afterwards they were overtaken by two riders on horseback. It was Volodia and Jenny, who seemed to take a childish delight in their flight

before the coming thunderstorm. A few paces behind them came Vassia, as a kind of jockey.

"We are seeking shelter in your house," cried Jenny as they cantered past them.

When Boroffsky and Nadia swept up to the entrance, Volodia had already sprung from his horse, and was preparing to aid Jenny to get down from hers, but she hardly touched his outstretched hand, and springing forward, alighted on the first step of the staircase. Then gathering up the train of her riding-dress, she turned round to greet Nadia.

"We were going down to the Volga, to have a look at the hills, when the rain suddenly set in, and I quickly decided upon seeking shelter here. How do you do, Nicholas Ossipovitch?" she added archly, turning towards Boroffsky. "You also devote your services to ill-fated ladies, I see."

She laughed, shaking the dust out of her riding-dress with her whip. The approaching thunderstorm, and the surprise of her arrival at Biälastolby, had acted like an intoxicating drink on Jenny; she was delighted with everything.

"Now, Nadia, do take me to your room; I must change my dress from head to foot. You'll give me one of yours, won't you?" and the two young girls whisked upstairs to Nadia's dressing-room.

"Listen to me, darling," began Jenny, while choosing the dress which was to supply the place of her drenched habit, "I long wanted you to treat me like

a real friend, and to drop the formal "vui"; do let us say "tui" to each other.¹ I am so fond of you, Nadia!" And having at last settled the important question of the dress, she rushed up to her, throwing both her arms round her neck, and giving her a hearty kiss.

"So, now it is settled, I can put a question to you, love," she said, quite solemnly, sitting herself down on her new friend's bed. "I saw yesterday our new examining magistrate, Konevetzky, you know,—the same who talks in such a thick, ridiculous way. He insisted upon talking French to me, paid me lots of compliments, and kept on repeating, 'Mademoiselle, vous devez horriblement souffrir d'être en province.' And she began to imitate not only the drawling accent of Konovetzky but even the lazy way in which he put his monocle into his left eye. Well, this bewitching young man assured mamma and me that you were—do not be angry with me—that you were a Nihilist!"

Jenny pronounced this last word in a half audible voice, a burning blush mounting to her brow, and her slender shoulders shaking, half with cold, half with confusion.

Strange to say, Nadia did not look angry, she only frowned a little and looked straight into Jenny's eyes.

"Have you any idea what that signifies—'a Nihilist'?"

¹ The French *tu* and *vous*.

"Well, I confess that I never talked to one; I sometimes met them in the streets, where they were pointed out to me, in black, filthy rags, with a round hat on their short hair, a pair of spectacles on their nose—no, not always spectacles; but, certainly, some dirty book in their hands. But I never saw them at their work—and that I wanted, oh, so much!"

"Now, do you think I look very like this girl in rags, with a dirty book in her hand?"

"Nonsense, Nadia!" screamed Jenny, jumping up from the bed, and again fondling her. "Please to be serious. I am no child, indeed I am not. In three days, on the 10th of this month, I'll be sixteen years old. I know very well that their work does not consist in looking so very odd, but that they have a very great, cleverly-organized work to do, and very strong convictions."

"Did you ever reflect on these convictions?"

"I read a great deal about them in novels," answered Jenny eagerly; "and though I know that such descriptions are not always true, I confess that they made such a deep impression on me that I did not know whether I ought to love or to hate them. Then, you see, they are all born and bred in towns, have got their 'development,' as they call it, from books, and yet they all care for nothing but the people. And this people they only see in the swings during the maslianitza.¹ Is it not so?"

¹ The butter-week, the last one of the carnival.

"Not exactly; there are some exceptions," said Nadia, smiling. "But then you," she added unexpectedly, "did you never give a thought to those ideas? Did you never reflect on the sufferings of those people, who maintain us with their labour?"

Jenny remained silent for a few moments, then, suddenly raising her head, fixed her eyes on her companion's face.

"What shall I say?" she said hesitatingly. "I can't say that I ever thought of them as people; it seems such a high and undefined idea; but I know very well that we rich people ought not to live only for our own sake—that's quite true. On the other side, I confess that the sight of a poor ragged boy makes a much deeper impression on me than all the printed descriptions of the sufferings of unknown multitudes. I don't know if I am expressing myself rightly, Nadia; but you will help me, won't you? only this feeling is perhaps wrong in your eyes?"

"Certainly not, my love; yet I must tell you that it is not a very admirable work to give a few pence to a ragged boy."

"What nonsense you talk! But, after all, do you know you have not yet explained anything to me? Perhaps there is nothing to explain; however, whether you explain or not, I'll never believe you are a Nihilist!"

With these words, Jenny walked up to the looking-glass, and began to fasten her body.

"I am ready, Nadia," she said. "Let us go down."

"Eugenia Alexandrovna, I shall tell your mother that if she allows you to roam over the country thus by yourself, you will run away from her some day," began Boroffsky laughingly, as the two young girls entered the room together. "Miss Finch ought not to let you out of her hands in this way."

"Miss Finch!" cried Jenny archly, "much she cares for me! But you can say whatever you like; it belongs to your office. Vladimir Alexandrovitch, will you be good enough to order whatever carriage you have, even a droshky, to take me home, for they expect me at dinner?"

"A droshky," exclaimed Volodia indignantly. "Mamma has already ordered the carriage to be ready at three o'clock."

To the great vexation of Volodia, Jenny sat down near Boroffsky, and devoted herself exclusively to him, who did his best to amuse her.

The relations of Jenny Ordinzoff to her step-mother were of a somewhat original nature, very much like those that sometimes exist in politics between sovereigns. She had been the idol of her father, and had grown up in a great independence. No one in the house ever dared to say anything to her, least of all her good-natured old governess. Besides, this Russified English miss loudly declared that young girls ought not to be meddled with; a very wise saying, for she knew by experience that Jenny did

not allow of any interference. At the death of her father, she had remained the sole and undisputed heiress of his large fortune. Elena Michailovna was certainly not quite satisfied with the way in which her husband had settled his affairs; but being a very clever woman, she resolved to avoid all sort of collision with her step-daughter, and never let her feel her power. To prove her gratitude for this, Jenny paid her all due respect, though in a rather superficial way. There were only two living beings in the house whom she loved—Miss Finch and her Danish dog, Jack. Some people even thought the dog came first. Oh, horror! Boroffsky at least told it to her face.

"It would not be so difficult to decide whom I hate most of all on earth," answered Jenny.

"Me, perhaps?" he asked laughingly, but he got no answer, Jenny having got up and drawn near to Nadia.

"I want you to come and ride with me some day," she said to her. "Feodor Vassilievitch gave me two horses. Oh, how grateful I am to him for that! A second riding-dress is being made for me; and as I am only a little bit taller than you, it will suit you."

Nadia, of course, refused this offer; but Jenny did not give way, and Volodia sustained her with all his might.

"You see, Nadeshda Sergeievna," said Boroffsky, "that we all do our best to force you into the enjoy-

ment of that charming, empty life which all your contemporaries lead. In the main they are right, are they not?"

In the meantime the carriage was at the door, and Volodia declared he would see Jenny home on horseback. Boroffsky also left, but not before it had been decided that they were all to meet again in three days at Nikolsky, on account of Jenny's birthday.

CHAPTER XIII.

IT was a rather large party which we find at Nikolsky on the 10th inst. Besides the inhabitants of Biälastolby, all our old friends were there—Tomiline and Berendeieff, the young scholar of the jurisprudence school, Konevetsky, and two neighbouring landed proprietors, Ouxoff and Drovnine. The latter was that very good-natured, liberal man whom Tomiline had mentioned at Anna Grigorievna's dinner-table. It was a most compassionate heart which beat in the breast of this old man. Though he had been brought up on the far-away steppe, on the splendid estate of his father, and though he was already sixty years old, yet he took a most lively, youthful part in all the burning questions of the day ; viz. : the American negroes and the Danubian Slavs, the French Republic and the great Russian community, Gambetta and the metropolitan Filaret, the Falanstères after Tourier's model, children's gardens and public schools, all interested him. He spoke with a small, thin voice, and was very fond of all diminutive expressions. In the Zemstvo, of which he was a most zealous member, he made himself

conspicuous for being always ready to express his sympathy at the slightest opportunity, or for writing addresses. He even wanted to vote some large sum of money, that he might get the management of the schools which he proposed to erect for the education of gardeners. But the Zemstvo decided that this business could never be done by them, and above all not be entrusted to the enlightened direction of Drovnine. He was in general the object of their innocent jests and bantering. But nobody laughed so much at him as his nearest neighbour and friend Ouxoff.

Arkadie Stepanovitch Ouxoff was renowned for the big and excellent dinners which he gave with true rural hospitality. He delighted in eating and drinking, in thoroughbred horses and lovely women and would have been as fond of shooting, dogs, and arms, if, alas! these physical enjoyments were not denied to him through the fatness of his huge body. In spite of this, Ouxoff was no idler, and his fat person moved about as quickly as his clever mind turned from one object to another. Stout people are usually considered to be very simple-minded and slovenly. Arkadie Stepanovitch was neither the one nor the other, just as a large rural hospitality is not always the proof of a kind disposition. In spite of the frequent tricks which many of the noblemen of his district played him, he enjoyed a large and well-deserved popularity. No one knew, like him, how to

cover an inconvenient proposition with the flowers of his sympathy, and thus to prevent all quarrelling in the Sobranie.

Volodia and Nadia came very early to Nikolsky, as it had been decided that the ride, which had been proposed to Nadia, should take place on that day, under the superintendence of Tomiline. According to their agreement, she put on the dark blue riding-habit, which had been provided by Jenny, and surrendered herself freely to the strong feeling of enjoyment which she experienced while cantering on the pretty little mare. She looked splendid on horse-back; the unwonted attire suited her faultless figure to perfection, and every one who saw her expressed their admiration. She got quickly accustomed to the movement of the horse, and confessed that she had rarely enjoyed herself so thoroughly as to-day.

After having changed her dress, she went down into the old library, where she knew that she would find lots of unread books scattered about. There were no guests in the room; Elena Michailovna and Jenny had disappeared, and Volodia was pacing the garden to and fro, turning over in his mind for the hundredth time the sweet impressions of the last days. When Tomiline came into the room, he found Nadia with a book, which she had taken down from one of the shelves. She was reading, resting on both her elbows.

"What's this? Poetry! even German! Schiller,

indeed! I congratulate you. My favourite book, alas! far-off years, far-off enthusiasm!"

A strange, never experienced feeling of shyness overcame Nadia; she almost felt ashamed, without knowing whether it was because he had found her reading or because she had blushed over it.

"This is the natural fruit of our long ride on this lovely May day," he went on, laughing. "Spring has its rights, and I am grateful for it. Now, I think that when, in an hour, you will have to talk clever things with our mutual friend Boroffsky, Schiller will have to vanish out of your head; don't you think so? Do you still fancy him so very clever since you made his acquaintance?"

Nadia had no time to answer him, for Nicholas Ossipovitch himself appeared in the doorway, and behind him Konevetzky, dressed in the height of fashion.

"Excuse my penetrating into this sanctuary," Boroffsky began, somewhat ironically, "but the whole house seems to be empty. We have vainly looked everywhere for Elena Micharlovna."

"I'll go and tell her that you are here," said Nadia, getting up and going towards the door, to avoid a conversation with Konevetzky.

The three guests did not remain long alone. After a few minutes, Jenny entered the room.

"I thought to find Nadia here," she said, from the door.

They all crowded round her to congratulate her. She looked quite lovely in her new silk dress, her mourning for her father being just over. Her sweet face was still flushed after her ride, her heavy tresses were gathered in a knot on the back of her small head, and in her manners there was almost unconsciously a tinge of seriousness, called forth by the importance of her accomplished sixteen years.

"I could not bring you any birthday gift to-day," said Boroffsky to her, "so instead of it I brought my youthful friend with me," and he pointed laughingly at the young lawyer. "But no, I plead guilty; I could not resist the temptation to bring you a new whip. You have such a propensity to misuse this sign of power, that I may hope to see you try it on me too, some time or other. What do you think?"

"I think you are the most insufferable of all nice people," said Jenny, receiving from his hands a perfect gem of a whip. She seemed dying to prove its strength at once, for she began striking her dress with it.

"Let us go into the drawing-room," she said, not knowing what to say to those three persons, so little suited to one another. "Mamma must certainly be there, and I fancy I heard the visitors' bell."

She was right, more guests had arrived. The ispravnik was trying the whole weight of his amiability on his hostess and on Anna Grigorievna. Poor Drovnine had already drawn two or three jests down

on his head from Ouxoff, who, sitting beside Elena Micharlovna, in the armchair of her deceased husband, deemed himself the most diverting man on earth.

The honourable Amfiloxi Nikandrovitch looked somewhat embarrassed when he was introduced to Nadia. His courteousness, however, was not less marked than usual.

"You don't know how much I regret that Destiny did not allow me to make your acquaintance before to-day." So he concluded his flowery speech.

"If you like, I shall be quite ready to account for every walk I have been taking till now. This will, perhaps, make up to you for not having known me as yet," she said sharply.

The ispravnik was quite dumbfounded at this answer. He wiped his forehead with his cambric handkerchief, and it was some time before he recovered his self-possession. Poor Konevetsky did not thrive any better at Jenny's hand. After his first unhappy essay, he did not dare to address himself again to Nadia ; but his youthful hostess, though she listened very patiently to him, took no pains to hide the mirth which his sharp wit occasioned her. At last she got tired of him, and leaving him to his reflections, escaped over to the other side of the room, where Drovnine formed the centre of a lively conversation.

He was jestingly telling Tomiline and Ouxoff that he knew somewhere, in one of the most remote

Russian provinces, a small village where an ideal workmen's society had suddenly changed all the peasants into the best of farmers.

"Only fancy," he said, "all the wishes of all good and nice people in Europe have found a fulfilment here in Russia, and we don't know of it. That's a pity, is it not?"

And he began gaily to tell how good it was to live in this new Arcadia, where the soil belonged to nobody.

"Where is it situated—your Arcadia? in the bogs of the province of Kostromà?" asked Ouxoff. "Yes, there, of course, land is not worth a copper coin. The inhabitants live upon moss or birch-crust; they have not bread enough for a jackdaw, to say nothing of human beings."

Drovnine was so offended that large red spots appeared on his pale cheeks.

"No, Arkadie Stepanovitch, you won't understand how important this is," he answered. "Yet this confederacy is a real thing, inhabited by our own natives, and has not been invented by some German poet or some idle chancery clerk."

"Well, then, are you not going to propose an address, and vote for somebody being sent down in the name of the Zemstvo to learn what you forgot to tell us, namely, what sort of lapti¹ women wear

¹ Rude shoes of plaited bark.

there, what form their sarafan¹ has got,—all a question of statistics. And then, you know, the station for agronomical experiments invented by you——”

“Well, what of that?” he cried, frightened.

“I went there last week! I looked and looked. ‘Where is the farm?’ I thought. There was a herd grazing somewhere, that was all. At last I discerned a peasant. He told me that the rural agronomist had sold the harvest as soon as he got it in, along with the building. That’s a nice situation, is it not? And yet we paid for it with money which was sorely wanted elsewhere.”

Here he knocked against his breast-pocket with his fat thumb. They all laughed.

“Now I don’t think money is so very scarce with you, Arkadie Stepanovitch,” said Boroffsky, with a little good-natured malice.

Ouxoff looked a little embarrassed. He was not fond of Boroffsky, and used to think that as long as he did not know him more thoroughly, it would be safer to keep aloof from him. He had no time, however, to answer. Bells were heard outside the window, and a troika dashed up to the door.

“Count Sergius Borissovitch has just arrived,” said a servant, appearing in the door.

Elena Michailovna started up and hurried out to receive her guest, her whole face beaming with de-

¹ A gown without sleeves.

light. The Count was coming upstairs, and advanced towards his niece with a somewhat old-fashioned courtesy. He bent down to kiss her hand, but she put her forehead close to his moustache.

"Mon oncle! quelle charmante surprise!" she cried.

"Ma chère amie! j'ai venu à vous voir, et à féliciter Eugénie. I am going to see my son at Doubniaky, you know,"—his son was a marshal of *noblesse* in a neighbouring district,—“and so I thought to take advantage of this opportunity and visit you.”

Count Sergius Borissovitch Sokolnitzky was the brother of Elena's mother. He was already seventy years old. His hair and beard were snowy white; his voice, though still good, sometimes had a broken ring, but his carriage was vigorous, and whenever he talked with ladies, a flash of his old vivacity lighted up his face. When he appeared in full uniform, his whole person had something very elegant, putting one in mind of long-forgotten times and habits. To-day, in spite of the dust and the heat of the road, he looked as fresh and prim as if he had just stepped out of his dressing-room.

Elena Michailovna introduced him to all her guests. He tried to say a kind word to everybody; but when nothing suitable occurred to him, his very bow seemed to ask forgiveness for this want of courtesy.

"I knew your late husband very well," he said to

Anna Grigorievna. "He was the very model of an officer ; and once, at the manœuvres at Krasnoe-Selo, I remember perfectly well how he refused to admit one of the Grand Dukes, because he had forgotten the password."

Anna Grigorievna was quite unconscious of her husband ever having distinguished himself through a too severe observation of discipline.

"C'est votre fille, madame ?" he continued, glancing admiringly at Nadia and bowing to her. "Charmante !" And his eyes sparkled so that he never heard the denial which Anna Grigorievna murmured somewhat inaudibly.

"You are a cousin to the late Prince Paul Dmitri-vitch," he went on, turning towards Boroffsky. "Delighted to make your acquaintance. He was a great friend of mine. We made the Turkish and Polish campaigns together. We were both adjutants and field-marsals. C'était un galant homme ; dur quelquefois, mais un galant homme."

The young lawyer now did his best to attract the Count's attention. "You serve here ?" he asked. "That's right. I always say that young people ought to begin with the province. They learn a great deal there."

At Nikolsky dinner was served at an early hour. Elena Michailovna had in this submitted to provincial habits. But just as she was going to take her uncle's arm, he stopped her, saying,—

"Je crois, ma chère amie, que nous allons être treize à table !"

The ispravnik, Berendereff, observing this, asked immediately if he ought not to disappear, pleading a headache; but Elena found another issue. She called Jenny to her side, and whispered a few words into her ear, upon which the young girl quickly disappeared. After a few moments she returned, shaking her head in answer to her step-mother's inquiring glance. Elena was in an awful dilemma. She knew that her uncle was very superstitious, though he did not like to confess it. Happily, the face of the land-steward appeared in the doorway. He came slowly into the room, and, turning towards the hostess, said in a loud voice, underlining every word,—

"You sent me word through your daughter that I was to take the fourteenth place at table."

The dignified agronom had evidently reflected that it was not worth while to risk his place for such a small sacrifice.

"I asked you to do me this favour," Elena answered, in a soft tone, though her eyes flashed rather angrily.

The Count talked a great deal during dinner, and listened very courteously to the answers that were given him. Though he did not always hear very distinctly what was said, yet his face never ceased to express a pleased attention.

His sayings, however, provoked some very sharp

retorts both from Volodia and Boroffsky, which made Jenny turn red and pale by turns, but the good-nature of the old man carried the day, and all went smoothly.

Dinner being over, they went out on the terrace to drink their coffee. Large groups of beautiful old trees, cut in a somewhat old-fashioned way, were scattered on the lawn in front of it. Two stone stair-cases led down into the garden.

"Now, this terrace puts me in mind of old, far-off times," said the Count to his niece, taking out of his pocket a very shabby-looking cigar case.

"I was here for the last time in the year '36, to visit Count Feodor Larinovitch," he went on, with a deep sigh; "you certainly heard about the late Countess Maria Vassilievna? Une beauté classique. They used to keep an open house. C'est ce qui a embrouillé ses affaires. And you know that his father—the same who was ambassador at Vienna, always received the Emperor Alexander here, whenever he came to the south of Russia. And this house, avec de pareils souvenirs, Feodor Larinovitch sold, and with all the family portraits too. And yet Nikolsky had belonged to them for six centuries. Yes, your uncle, Paul Dmitrivitch, was right"—here he suddenly addressed Boroffsky—"when he said to me, 'We have no aristocracy because we have no traditions.'"

"Never mind, Count," answered Boroffsky, "it is

easier to get on without burdens. Your military experience must have taught you this."

The old man did not answer, but turned away.

"I hope that I do not prevent the young people from amusing themselves," he began again, after a few moments' silence, addressing his niece. "Je suis sûr que ces demoiselles voudraient descendre au jardin," and he looked smilingly towards the place where the young girls were standing.

Jenny wanted, in fact, to leave the terrace. She had made a croquet-lawn in front of the house, and ruined many flower-beds for the purpose. Boroffsky joined her quite unexpectedly; and as they really wanted a sixth player, the honourable chief of the district police was received with open arms by the rest of the young people.

"La petite est vraiment délicieuse," again said the Count, turning towards Elena, while gazing at the group of players. The young girl really looked charming, and Volodia never took his eyes off her, though she had not deigned to look at him the whole afternoon.

The evenings in May are long, and the sun was still high in the sky, though it had already struck eight o'clock. The peaceful silence of the night was beginning to settle on the terrace. The Count had given himself up to the remembrance of far-off days, and had grown quite silent. Ouxoff was breathing heavily after the good dinner, and had even forgotten

to tease poor Drovnine, who was pouring his philosophical nonsense into the ears of Feodor Vassilievitch; and the hostess was asking herself why she, at her age, was condemned to live only the life of others, and herself to remain motionless between the pale remembrances of the past and the rosy dawn of others' youthful happiness?

"It is time for me to go back to town," said the Count, rising and putting his lips on the beautiful hand of his niece. "The steamer leaves at nine o'clock tomorrow morning; and at my age one likes to go to bed early, you know."

All got up. While shaking hands with Tomiline, he discovered the cross of St. George on his breast. His eyes instantly lighted up.

"When did you get that?" he asked. "Forgive me for not having seen it before."

"Before Sebastopol," answered Tomiline curtly.

"Sebastopol! how happy you are to have been there! I was obliged to remain behind at Petersburg."

"Yet you have been at battles." (The old man had the St. George's round his neck.)

"Oh, that's long, long ago; and then it was not Sebastopol. We ought to take off our hats to all those who were there."

He shook hands with Tomiline, and then hurried off.

The croquet was soon given up too. The ispravnik and Boroffsky proved such bad players that Jenny lost her patience.

"Nadia is tired after her ride, I daresay," she said, throwing away her mallet, and turning away.

Boroffsky proposed to Nadia to take a turn in the garden, and Jenny hurried upstairs to fetch a shawl. The air was beginning to get cool. When she returned, she went in search of Nadia, but had hardly reached the turning of the side alley, where some beautiful lilac bushes were beginning to bud, when she met Volodia.

"Eugenia Alexandrovna!" he began.

She did not answer, but hurried on.

"Eugenia Alexandrovna," he repeated, "are you angry with me, that you treat me so badly to-day?"

"And you dare to put such a question to me?"

"Yes," he said in a flutter of delight on hearing her at least answer him, "for I can't fancy you are really angry with me for what I said at dinner. Well, I confess I was wrong, for I ought to have been indulgent to the prejudices of that old scarecrow, because he is your uncle.

She stopped short, looking angrily at him.

"How do you dare call him a scarecrow? He is an honourable old gentleman—a general. You will be indulgent to him because he is my uncle, you say; but he is not my uncle at all; and then that would be no reason."

Volodia looked somewhat crestfallen.

"I did not know you were so very severe, Eugenia Alexandrovna," he said sheepishly.

"Well, am I not right, when in my own home, on my own birthday, you allow yourself such sallies as you did at dinner? I shall never more wish to ride or walk with you after this, remember that."

"I confess that I was wrong," he said, in a trembling voice; "but don't you think there are sometimes convictions that are stronger than your prudence?"

Whenever Volodia talked of his convictions he always had recourse to high and refined expressions.

"Are these convictions really yours?" asked Jenny, smelling at a branch of lilac, which she had just gathered.

"I have not yet talked them over with you."

"And you have done well," she said, with difficulty restraining a merry peal of laughter; "if they are all of this sort, the best thing you can do is to forget them entirely."

"I am quite ready to do so in your presence," said Volodia, getting more and more yielding.

"Not only in my presence," she interrupted him; "you must promise me—do you understand?—promise me, that you will entirely give up those wicked thoughts of yours. If you only hide them in the presence of ladies, it would be much like hypocrisy, and that would not be nice at all."

"But why do you call them wicked? However, if you want to know the whole truth, I got so angry at dinner, because——"

"Well, because——"

"Because I was out of sorts."

"'Out of sorts'? Well, and why?"

"You had been chatting unceasingly with Boroffsky."

"Unceasingly? How dare you say so!" she cried angrily, while her eyes laughed archly.

"Now, Eugenia Alexandrovna, forgive me for this once; be generous," he pleaded, seizing her hand.

"But you must be careful; never do it again."

He tried to kiss her hand, which she had allowed to rest one moment within his. But she tore it away from him, and lashing his fingers with the twig of lilac which she had just gathered, she rushed off towards the house. He bent down to raise the twig, which she had lost as she ran off, and pressed his lips to the budding petals.

Meanwhile Boroffsky and Nadia had been pacing up and down the alley of old lime-trees.

"You wonder, perhaps, at my losing my usual self-possession," he said; "but indeed I could not listen quietly to the stupid boastings of those . . . whose . . . forefathers did not save Rome. It is sometimes necessary to put these gentlemen, who love to play at the English lords, in mind of their being perfectly useless in Russia. I respect a hundred times more a tshinovnik bureaucrat, though they are usually mercenary, than I do these paper knights, who are unfit for any work."

"This can't be said of the old Count, at least," she

said; "he was wounded in the Caucasus, as you heard."

"And you believe this? Don't you know how all these distinctions are obtained? Independence and nobility! May fate preserve us from ever seeing those people exhibit these qualities! Most fortunately for us they always sat with folded hands, boasting of their money and orders. But if ever they should be called upon to act as a party, then all good Russians would have to suffer."

He talked long and well on this theme. Nadia seldom answered him; she listened to his words, wondering at them, but not fully trusting him. She felt as if she had not yet got the key to this man's character.

"So here you have my confession," he concluded. "I seldom happen to be so open-hearted; you see now that we don't belong to opposite parties."

He stopped a moment, as if waiting for an answer, but she remained silent, only bowing down her head, as if lost in thought.

"You ought to understand and to value that I do not the less pursue—yes, pursue—your so-called friends, though they are the enemies of my enemies. They do, in fact, prevent our development, they create an unprecedented solidarity between government and the shadow of nobility, and with that they may perhaps succeed in putting life into this shadow."

This rather misty explanation of his political convictions had a certain charm in Nadia's eyes, but struck her at the same time by its vagueness.

Nicholas Ossipovitch was one of the numerous cousins of Prince Paul Dmitrivitch Boroffsky, celebrated for his intelligence and harshness, the same who had made himself famous in repressing several revolts in the Caucasus.

As a reward for these high deeds, he got the title of prince and the decoration of St. Andrew. This childless old man loved his nephew, a pale and clever boy, took the greatest care of his education, and had the firm intention of making him his heir. Nicholas left the school of jurisprudence with a golden medal and with golden hopes of a brilliant career, the title of prince, and a large fortune. But the old man died suddenly, and no will was found after him. It was a hard blow to the young scholar, and drove him almost mad. The unavoidable change which took place in his position towards society in general awoke in his heart a deep-rooted hatred to those circles in which he had hoped to penetrate so easily. The door to this bewitched world suddenly closed upon him, but he swore loudly to open it with his own key. The name of his uncle would always be a great help, and jurisprudence showed him an easy way to high honours. The first steps he took had already led him on to celebrity. His chief recognised in him a great intelligence, a large aptitude

for work, and a rare eloquence; his coldness and sternness did not hurt him in his eyes; on the contrary, the most difficult cases, especially those that had a political tinge, were confided to him rather than to others. Meanwhile he tried to hide under his very quiet exterior the fiery ambition of his heart, and his deep abhorrence of all that could prevent his quickly rising to high honours.

Twilight was setting in, that lovely twilight of a May night, when darkness seems transparent, and all objects, wrapt as if in a shroud, slowly dissolve into airy mist. The shadowy outlines of the trees stood out against the blue sky, and in the background, the house, cold and silent as a sleeping beauty, seemed to start out of the surrounding darkness. In the midst of this darkness an unseen and unheard world suddenly began to stir and to move. In the fresh verdure of the bushes, in the thickness of the grass, in the soft spring air, sounds and murmurings were audible, as if a new, mysterious life was wakening up. And in answer to this tumult rising round her it seemed to Nadia that a new, much finer gift of hearing had suddenly developed within her.

She began to listen, trying to penetrate into the very mystery of this night life; in every twig, in every branch, a new and marvellous world unfolded and breathed; the drowsy birds began to shake their feathers and stretch their wings, a large night butter-

fly darted forwards and struck against a branch, the lilacs wafted their perfume more strongly, and a strange change of undefined mysterious shadows began to take place before her eyes. The young girl involuntarily glanced at Boroffsky to see if the approach of the lovely May night awoke the same feelings within him. They were just coming out of the avenue, and as the soft rays of the new moon fell on his face, it looked paler and colder than ever before.

"Take care not to catch cold, Nadeshda Sergeevna," he said, suddenly stopping short. "Shan't we go back?"

"Yes," she said, as if coming out of a trance.

Almost all the guests had left. Elena Michailovna, faithful to her duty as a hostess, had sat down to play at cards with Anna Grigorievna, the ispravnik, and Tomiline. Jenny was making tea, and submitting with good grace to the neighbourhood of Konevetsky. Suddenly Volodia Koretzky rushed into the room with an open telegram in his hand.

"An express has just come from Biälastolby with this," he cried eagerly. "Mitia is coming to-morrow; he has telegraphed from Moscow."

This news put an end to the play; Anna Grigorievna, greatly excited, dropped her cards, and even Elena Michailovna could not entirely hide the troubled expression of her face. They all rose from the table, and the honourable ispravnik, who, as if

on purpose, had most exquisite cards in his hand, declared that ladies were very charming in general, but perfectly unable to appreciate the important business of card-playing.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE arrival of Dmitry at Biälastolby did not produce any change in the daily routine of life. Anna Grigorievna at first talked a great deal about giving up the whole estate to her eldest son, but it soon grew evident that she did not feel equal to such a sacrifice. Having ruled her household for so many years, she could not do without those daily, petty occupations which the management of a large farm always brings with it. Her eldest son was certainly a great authority in her eyes, but since his journey abroad she did not trust him as much as formerly, and lent an unwilling ear to his reforming ideas, as being charming in theory but impossible and almost dangerous in practice. Above all, she disliked what he said about the necessity of making some concessions to the peasantry.

"If you listen to the peasants," she said, "they will tell you a great deal of nonsense, of course; but really I don't think I have any obligations towards them now. As long as they were mine, I never neglected them; but they have been taken off my hands; they are, in fact, only my neighbours, and I only want

to live with them on neighbourly terms. I don't offend them, but I won't be offended by them."

This standing-point was firmly adhered to by Anna Grigorievna, and from her words it was easy to hear that she still felt secretly exasperated at the cessation of her old power.

Dmitry did not answer her, though he had already seen that many things had been changed for the worse during the two years he had spent abroad. He limited himself to the modest part of his mother's steward, only trying to alter here and there the somewhat old-fashioned way in which the estate had been managed for so many years. He was too conscious of his mother's devotion, respected too much her perseverance, ever to do anything against her will, though this non-interference weighed heavily on him.

He possessed a charming character, enjoyed high spirits, and his easy good-nature was a great help to him in his intercourse with people, and in the management of his business. He had studied farming with the best German masters, yet he never entertained the ridiculous idea of changing his own fertile steppe into some poor imitation of a South German farm. He had one great weakness, however: he was so devoted to chemistry that even on a lovely summer night, when every one else was out of doors, he shut himself up for hours together in his laboratory to find the solution of some interesting problem.

He was especially occupied with Pasteur's investigations, and thus provoked the never-ending raileries of Nadia.

"You quite forget real nature for the artificial one," she said once, as he left his work at midnight to go down into the garden.

"Don't be afraid," he said; "I shan't turn hermit on account of some great discovery, which I shall probably never make."

She glared angrily at him.

"No fear of that," she whispered slightly.

"Perhaps you are right," he said, without seeming to observe the inimical tone of her voice, "but I do not consider myself called upon to impose any sort of penance on myself; I love chemistry for its own sake, just as my brother loves shooting as the right of a free nobleman."

"I do not doubt that your *scientific* occupations"—and she laid a stress on the word 'scientific'—"only serve you as an amusement. Happy those whose whole lives are devoted to the pursuit of pleasure; but I confess that I do not envy them."

In this way they used to quarrel very often. Dmitry always answered her in a quiet, laughing way. His mother had told him what she knew of Nadia's past; and he felt for her that sort of soft tenderness which one feels for a child bereft of its parents, or a bird fallen out of its nest. He treated her like a little girl; and this may have been the

reason of her exasperation against him. She hardly knew herself why she disliked him so much, why she always sought for an opportunity of wounding him; it seemed to her as if he was the living incarnation of all that she hated. His open-hearted nature, his gay voice, even his clear and proud eyes were objects of dislike to her. She had been so accustomed to high-flown speeches that the very simplicity of Dmitry's character struck her as artificial. There was no mystery about him, all was simple and straightforward, and to this young girl, who, from her very childhood, had been puzzling her head about riddles, this was simply unbearable.

One morning, about three weeks after Dmitry's return, they were all sitting at the breakfast table, vainly waiting for him to come. Anna Grigorievna had already twice asked after him, for she was getting more and more devoted to punctuality in her habits.

"The starost is waiting in the courtyard for him to come in," answered Terenty, when she put him the same question for the third time; "they want him to accompany them to the land-mark."

"Oh, they have come again about the division of land!" cried Anna Grigorievna. "I positively refuse."

"Perhaps he has gone on before," said Terenty, with his wooden expression, looking out of the window.

A moment after, Dmitry entered the room. He

looked very nervous, his brows were knit, his lips slightly trembled. He sat down without saying anything, only rubbing his forehead with his hand.

"You look very tired," said Anna Grigorievna ; "of course you are tired of this eternal question of the division of the soil."

Dmitry did not answer at once.

"I wanted to convince myself of the right of their claims," he said slowly, fixing his hazel eyes on his mother's face, "so I walked down with them along the land-mark and the soil which has been cut off from their share ; well, I got perfectly convinced that their claims are just, and that it would be a very easy thing to come to an understanding with them. It would only incur a very small loss on our part."

Another silence ensued. Dmitry's eyes still rested on his mother's face ; as he received no answer, they were withdrawn. His words had made no impression on Anna Grigorievna, the small wrinkles on her nose had only deepened, and gave an unwonted expression of severity to her face.

"You may examine as much as you like," she said at last, in a cold voice ; "I only ask you not to make any promise. I offered them five times to take their full share,—ask Feodor Vassilievitch if it is not so,—and they refused most stubbornly. If they are dissatisfied now, it is their own fault."

Saying this, she got up and left the room.

Volodia, who had been deeply buried in his book

during the whole conversation, now suddenly looked up, and said with a gloomy look,—

“I can’t understand mamma; these are rather ideas of a negro planter.”

“Why did not you utter this opinion in her presence?” asked Dmitry archly.

“Why? why? I once read something to her out of this book, pointing with his finger at the book he was holding—“a very remarkable passage; but she told me it was all galimatias—Tshernoknishnikoff! galimatias, indeed!”

“Show me this work of the apostle of all Russian nonsense,” said Dmitry, putting his hand on the book; “very severely prohibited, certainly.”

“‘The Moral-Social Conditions for the Progressive Evolutionary Development of the Russian People,’” said Volodia, in one breath.

“Short and clear,” exclaimed Dmitry; “why don’t you treat mother with this?”

“Did you read it?” asked Volodia, trying to give to his voice a shade of contempt.

“Only fancy, I did not feel the slightest sympathy with it.”

“Of course not,” answered Volodia, with a sneer; “in the eyes of an aristocrat all arguments, even the most convincing, are powerless.”

“And in your eyes it is a civic victory.”

Nadia’s eyes, which had been bent down since Dmitry’s entrance, were now suddenly raised, while

a mocking sparkle flashed in their depths at the answer which the young radical got from his brother.

Volodia frowned on seeing these clear eyes sparkle in this way ; he shut his book angrily and got up.

"You have not yet decided upon going to Nikolsky, have you ?" he asked of Dmitry.

"You know that I do not intend going there at all," answered Dmitry, while a strange expression of sadness crept over his face.

"I can't understand why Elena Michailovna has not been here since you came," continued Volodia, without observing the impression which his words made on his brother.

"Go there by yourself, if you like," retorted Dmitry ; and his usually soft voice sounded strangely harsh.

Volodia left the room without answering. He had been twice at Nikolsky of late without finding any one at home, and he feared that the sweet intercourse between the two families might be suddenly broken off, and his day-dreams destroyed for ever. Lovers are apt to be depressed. The few days in which he had not seen Jenny had sufficed to revive all his radical aspirations ; far from her he had again succumbed to their witchery, and her mysterious coldness had been of the greatest advantage to the book of Tshernoknishnikoff.

"You never tried to nurse the holy fire in Volodia's heart, I see," said Dmitry, turning towards Nadia,

"and I don't know whether I ought to be grateful for it or not."

"Don't thank me for that," she answered sharply, and her eyes clearly said, I won't have anything to do with you; "weakness of purpose is certainly better than the acknowledged pursuit of pernicious aims."

"And this inveterate sinner, in pursuit of pernicious aims, is no one else than your servant here present, I suppose?"

"Yes, you! You are not easily led astray; you know your aim, the worse for you!" A hot flush rose to her cheeks, and her eyes sparkled. "You have studied very seriously and seen a great deal; and what is the use of all your knowledge and all your experience? You cower for whole days over your chemical focus, and never raise your little finger in behalf of one of your fellow-creatures. You laugh at your brother's phrases; well, let us grant that it is ridiculous to be enthusiastic about the books of Tshernoknishnikoff!" She forgot that she herself had raved about these books once. "But the peasants, claiming a just division of the land, do you consider this but a hollow phrase? To grant them the possibility of living like human beings, is that only radical nonsense?"

Dmitry listened silently to her. He never thought of answering her in his usual jesting tone. She had never talked to him in this way before, and he stared

at her in speechless wonder that such a childlike mouth could utter these vehement words.

"You know that I did my best to study this question conscientiously," he answered.

"Yes, you did, but with the prudent indifference of a man who is delighted to do a good work, provided the pains be not too great. You studied the question, and then gave way at once."

"You merely forget one thing," he said, dropping his voice, "that Biälastolby does not belong to me, and that I have no right to press my opinions on my mother; or do you deny that filial respect is a duty?"

This time it was her turn to be silent. For one short moment her eyes met those truthful, straightforward eyes of Dmitry's, and her gaze sank before his; but she quickly recovered herself, and said, with her old inimical intonation,—

"But there is another business that you might forward without provoking Anna Grigorievna's anger. You know the awful state in which your mother's schools are on her estate, don't you?"

"The schoolmaster is good for nothing," he interrupted her eagerly; "he is a drunkard and a churl."

"And, knowing this, you take no steps to get rid of him, nor to look out for another one! I tell you there is an excellent, very clever man here in this place. If you only write two words to Feodor Vassilievitch, he will support the question in the school committee."

"I should be delighted to do you a favour, Nadeshda Sergeevna," he answered, in a somewhat constrained voice, "but allow me to observe that a mere wish of yours can't decide this question. In spite of all the qualities of your *protégé*, I can't, out of sheer amiability, vote for a person of whom I know nothing at all ; is it not so, say so yourself ?"

Nadia threw her head back with an angry movement.

"I don't want your amiability. My word signifies nothing in your eyes, of course ; but the priest——"

"Well, I confess that I do not put the slightest trust in Father Sosima's recommendations, and however indifferent you judge me, I think that, even in such trifles, prudence is necessary. Upbraid me with this as often as you like."

Saying this, he left the room, to order his droshky to take him over to Tomiline.

CHAPTER XV.

A BRILLIANT spring sun was pouring its bright rays over the steppe; towards the horizon a bluish haze, always seen about the beginning of May, hovered over the pale azure of the sky, blending somewhere in the misty distance with the soft tints of the boundless fields. A light breeze was slightly stirring the verduring plain. Only here and there, far off, appeared dimly a small ravine, like a dark fold on a smooth surface, out of which peeped the roofs of some straw-thatched houses. In one of these the village of Teplo was ensconced, and on its borders the modest manor-house belonging to Feodor Vassilievitch had been erected. It looked somewhat unprepossessing from afar off, but when looked closely at, it struck every one through its almost German neatness and cleanliness. The small wooden building was in the best of order: the roof was painted in fresh and brilliant colours, the lime-rubbish carefully put together, and even the plain paling looked sturdy and decorous, like a row of soldiers led out for exercise. In one thing only the solicitous care of the proprietor was not visible. Though he had tried to embellish

as much as possible this unpicturesque, hereditary place of his, the lime and maple trees in the garden had a somewhat piteous look, and the lilac bushes on the stockade round the house had remained ridiculously dry and of small growth.

He was standing himself, in a white military linen dress, on the staircase of the small wing, where the meetings of the justices of peace took place. He had just finished the business of the day, and was talking with the steward from Nikolsky, Gondsevsky, while some peasants, whose business had been despatched, were still lingering under the porch, as if wondering that the justice of peace had nothing more to say to them, nor they anything more to ask of him.

"Well, you see, Stanislaus Vikenditch," Tomiline was saying, "that you yourself make it impossible for me to prosecute the peasants for felling the timber in the wood. Really I can't understand how you, a clever man, having finished your course at the academy, could conclude such an absurd agreement. Now the peasants are masters in your woods!"

A strange, half-mocking smile lighted up the sickly face of the Pole.

"Well, we shall try and be more prudent for the future."

He had not time to say anything more, for Dmitry's droshky swept up to the entrance, and Tomiline stepped down to meet him, taking him at once into the house.

"How comfortable it always looks here," said Dmitry, struck with the careful decoration of the old man's modest home. In the small drawing-room, which they passed to get out into the balcony, the painted floor glittered like a mirror, and it would hardly have been possible to find a grain of dust on the mahogany table or the chest of drawers, that served as book-shelves.

"I have tried to embellish it a little in the two years of your absence, you see ; but the garden won't thrive," he said, pointing to the small enclosure, where the paths were perfectly kept, and the flower-beds arranged with the highest taste, but where, alas ! no shade was to be found.

"But your flowers are lovely," said Dmitry, looking about him ; and, in fact, the culture within doors had succeeded much better than in the open air : splendid full-bloom white rhododendrons filled the balcony, and on the window-sill the dark green leaves of a laurel bush sparkled in the sunshine. But the favourites of the old man, his pride and joy, were two tea-roses, just beginning to open, and filling the whole room with their fragrance.

Dmitry sat down, drawing out of his pocket a small brownish meerschaum tobacco pipe.

"I learnt this in Germany," he said, observing the startled look of Tomiline, as he began to smoke.

The old man now began to question him very

closely about the impressions he had brought from abroad; he had never travelled himself, but had preserved from his student days a sort of enthusiastic love for Germany, which he fancied inhabited exclusively by worshippers of art. Who knows if our ideas about women and art are not the more ideal the less we know of them?

Tomiline wondered a little to find the poetical and philosophical Dmitry so very much interested about farming and cattle breeding. But in him the landed proprietor spoke as loudly as the reader of Schiller, so he could not but approve the intention of the young man to devote himself to country life and its duties.

"And public service, what of that? You have given it up, it seems, in spite of your uncle?"

"Rather, thanks to my uncle. You know how zealously I took up service, fancying, like so many young people, that it was I who, from my chancery-room, was governing Russia. And in fact, what projects did not pass through my hands? Projects about the re-organization of towns, the strengthening or weakening of police, the reform of prisons, the watering of the steppe—in a word, everything contributed to make me believe that I was indeed the ruler of Russia. But there was one drawback—I was encouraged, thanked, got two crosses, yet was, after all, nothing but a clerk! And though my uncle, and even the minister, discussed all questions with me, as

soon as some real business was to be despatched,—do you understand?—some resolution to be taken, I had nothing to do but to copy. Whenever a school, or a new road, or a fresh supply of grain was wanted in the province, we always sent some evasive answer—never a real solution. During six years I worked hard at the destruction of Crown paper. At last, feeling sick and faint, I went abroad; my uncle provided me with a Crown commission for the investigation of German mineral waters to be adopted at Lipetzky and Old Rusa. The commission I never fulfilled, of course, no one caring for it; but when my uncle called me back to Petersburg, threatening me, in the case of non-compliance, with some punishment, I told him I was going to devote myself to farming, and left at once for our estate."

"Will you enter the Zemstvo?"

"Certainly, if I am elected next time. I hope I shall be. Please, are the parties in your district as much at variance as they were formerly?"

"Yes, but without bloodshed. All animosity is always silenced at the marshal's table. Ouxoff is a very hospitable man, you know; he is considered a great supporter of our white party."

"And a nice one," laughed Dmitry.

"Yes, but you know our misfortune is that the question with us will always be: Are you for or against Ivan Ivanovitch; never for or against the proposal.

That's why such people as you would have a very hard life among us. You would never want to be intimate with all those men on the judge's bench, nor would you choose a candidate as member of the court of justice because he happens to be the nephew of the marshal."

"And do you agree with all this?"

"I?" laughed Tomiline. "Remember I was already arbiter in the year 1861; and in the district they all fancy they can't get on without me; and then I am an authority among the peasants!"

And he went on to give him all the details of what had been done lately in the district, mentioning all the liberal nonsense of Drovnine, and the dexterity with which Ouxoff avoided all the nets that were set for him by the opposition.

"I wanted to hear your opinion about one question which troubles me very much," again began Dmitry; "the statute charter was introduced in your district, was it not?" And he told him about the never-ending claims of the peasants.

"Don't trouble about that," answered Tomiline; "the peasants have given up all their claims to the land, because the division seemed cheaper to them; now they see they were mistaken in their calculations, they want to get it back again, in order to sell it twice as dear. This is a matter of course; you ought, however, not to give way, the Emancipation law being signed."

"This is all very good, but try and convince them that they ought now to farm the land which belongs to the proprietor, after having ploughed it gratuitously for ages ! And tell them their general condition would be improved thereby ! I would do all I could to avoid a judicial decision, and wish mutual trust to rule all our relations."

"I fear you would have to wait long for that. The distrust that has been nursed for ages can't disappear at once ; they will not quickly learn to look upon their former masters as equals and neighbours. We are to them what the fire is to us, and no law and no circular will ever convince them that our rights are holy. Therefore, though they are rich at Nikolsky, and have got their full part,—though the woods that were granted to them are splendid, yet they ruthlessly cut down the timber in the proprietor's woods."

"Yes, I observed on driving here that the primitive woods of Nikolsky had been turned into English parks, with charming walks."

"Oh, for our wranglings with these people ! Elena Michailovna has got a Pole as steward, and I don't think I am wrong when I maintain that he ruins the estate, whether it be on purpose or by inexperience. Your uncle, as trustee, appointed him and gave him his full confidence ; he values him a great deal because he was brought up at the academy, I fancy."

"And yet has no idea of farming ? How very like my uncle !"

"Are you going to call upon Elena Michailovna?"

Dmitry's face changed, and he took up his hat.

"Oh, I forgot to ask you about that young man."

"The student on whose account Nadia Sergeevna got so excited? I have inquired about him. He has excellent certificates, and has received his education at the surgeons' school. He is said to be a quiet young man, a cousin of your priest, it seems."

"Yes, yes; so he will do."

"Perfectly, I'll vote for him in the school committee."

Dmitry took leave of the old man and drove home; but on the road back, before reaching the manor-house, he turned into the fields where some labourers were working with a new plough just received from Moscow. He had already discovered in the distance how slovenly the men were working. He tied his horse to the paling, and walked farther in over the field.

"What are you doing? Is it thus that you ought to plough?" he cried, approaching the two men, who were moving the plough in the clumsiest way. They stopped at once, and doffed their caps wonderingly to the barine.

"We do just as the starost Jacob Savelieff taught us to do," one of them answered.

"Wait a moment; I'll show you how it ought to be done."

And Dmitry took hold of the plough and lashed the horse, but the share turned round, and did not get out of the mould.

"What can be the matter?" he cried; "it used to work perfectly well. Eh! eh! three screws have fallen off, I see, and the share has got loose; why didn't you see this?"

"We did not know," they answered indifferently, with a yawn.

"I hope it won't be proved that the plough was spoiled on purpose."

The labourers stared at the barine, and a wicked flash sparkled in their eyes.

"Where's the starost? Call him!"

But he was already standing near Dmitry, his cold, motionless eyes, as usual, bent on the ground. He seemed to have started out of the very soil. Dmitry gave him a hearty scolding, but his beardless face did not show the slightest embarrassment. It remained as passionless as that of a dead man.

"It has been spoiled, indeed it has," he answered, looking contemptuously at the labourers; "but you know how these people behave, don't you?"

Dmitry had an inveterate distrust of this man, who never looked straight into his eyes, but as he was unable to prove anything, he walked off towards his droshky, feeling a great deal upset.

Here he found Nadia, with Boroffsky, who had come to Biälastolby for the first time since Dmitry's

return. The gentlemen greeted each other in a friendly way, having already met at Petersburg.

"We have been admiring you," said Nadia ; "you do not scorn to plough yourself, but then we are told that the Chinese Emperors do the same once a year."

"Well, this misfortune is not so very great, I think," said Boroffsky, to whom Dmitry told the accident with the plough. "Such innocent acts of insubordination are now rarely accomplished by our ex-vassals. For one thing, however, I am greatly indebted to them—though they are rather fond of setting our houses on fire, they are at least only prompted to do it by very primitive motives, such as the wish to profit by it ; higher theories, which some young people try now-a-days to instil into them, are unknown to them, at least till now."

"These young people are not received very graciously by them, are they?" asked Dmitry.

"How long this will last I dare not prophesy," answered Boroffsky, and it was difficult to say by his intonation whether he wished this or not. "The Russian people are much like children—they don't know what is good for them. Our common people are just as quiet and peaceful as a Swiss lake in fine weather, but you know what happens when the wind rises suddenly."

"Happily no one can foretell the weather," drily answered Dmitry.

They were slowly walking on towards the house, while the horse was being led by the starost.

"Do you remember the peasants' riot at Slatürsky?" asked Boroffsky, turning towards Nadia; "well, Konevetsky has concluded the examination, and it was not so badly done; fifteen men have been sent to prison."

Though the railing tone of Boroffsky always exasperated Nadia, yet his cold and self-possessed irony also exercised a certain fascination over her, as inimical powers sometimes do.

"What for?" asked Dmitry.

"Well, for nothing, if you will. They once called the elder to account for some Crown money which had been wasted, and another time they delivered an agitator, though a rather small one, into our hands. This is the way, you see, how we treat our allies."

Dmitry looked furious.

"But this is simply driving them into the arms of the propaganda," he cried.

"May be; however, this is no business of mine. I am impeacher by profession, and in such cases my conscience is—the State law."

Dmitry here broke off his conversation with Boroffsky, and turning towards Nadia,—

"*A propos*," he said, "I forgot to tell you your wish has been fulfilled; the teacher Brusskoff will be appointed."

She found no words in which to thank him.

As they approached the house, they saw a carriage at the entrance door. Elena Micharlovna, who was still sitting in it, jumped out, without waiting for Boroffsky, who was hurrying up towards her.

"It is very long since I was here," she said, addressing Nadia, after the first greetings were over; "I have been so much worried of late."

Her eyes now first lighted upon Dmitry. She held out her hand to him as to a dear companion, and tried not to observe the embarrassed way in which he shook hands with her.

"Delighted to see you, Dmitry Alexandrovitch," she exclaimed, as if accustomed to see him often; "I ought to be angry with you for not having yet called upon me."

As if on purpose, she did not wait for his answer, but turned towards Nadia, asking her to take her to her aunt. The gentlemen followed behind them.

"Why can't I treat her just in the same way I treat my other acquaintances?" Dmitry mentally ejaculated as he entered the drawing-room. "If she has forgotten all that passed between us, why should I remember?"

And he decided that the exasperation which filled his heart towards her, like sediment, was unworthy of him; he would treat her in the same friendly way as she did him.

Elena Micharlovna knew that the best way of putting an end to an awkward position is to ignore it;

and no one, in fact, could have withstood the charming way in which she tried to help him over the embarrassment of a first meeting. But while talking gaily with him, she was continually scanning his features, and comparing them with those that were engraved in her memory. She knew perfectly well that she had been the cause of deep, heart-burning sorrow to him, and it struck her at once that during these years in which they had not met, all traces of these sufferings had disappeared from his features, which looked quite young again. They breathed, in fact, such a peace as those only know who see a clear and bright way before them, on which no obstacle from old, long-forgotten times is to be found. The firmly traced chin, the lips with their proud smile, the true and straightforward expression of his hazel eyes, all expressed that peaceful power which scorns every strange yoke, and knows how to defend its personal independence. On his cheeks the flush of youth was still visible, and if it had not been for the forehead, on which his hair was beginning to get thin, and for the furrow between his eyebrows, which bore witness of some great sorrow having swept over him, one might have thought that his still young life had been entirely without pangs.

Elena Michailovna talked very openly of the most unexpected difficulties which she had met with in the management of her step-daughter's estate. Her way of talking seemed to imply that she was now quite an old woman, without any right to youthfulness. It

seemed strange to hear her talk thus, and it would have been difficult to decide whether this entire abjuration of all that which a pretty woman of twenty-eight years prizes a thousand times more than the cares of farming was perfectly sincere ; but who will ever be able to tell where the sincerity of women begins ?

" I really don't know what to do in this case. Your uncle," she went on, turning towards Dmitry, "gave me a very learned steward, but I am convinced that he is slowly ruining the estate. He seems to belong to the most advanced red party, and plays me ever so many tricks ; still, I dare not send him away without Peter Nicolaïevitch authorizing me to do it."

"My son might be of some use to you, perhaps," said Anna Grigorievna obligingly.

Elena's handsome eyes flashed and rested for one short moment tenderly on Dmitry's face.

"I dare not take up his time for me," she said hesitatingly.

"My time is entirely at your disposal," he answered quickly ; but he seemed to imply at the same time that, though he was perfectly decided to devote his valueless time to the helpless proprietor, he did not wish his relations with Nikolsky to be put on a more intimate footing.

It was decided that he was to write at once to Peter Nicolaïevitch to get a procuration.

The studied coldness of Dmitry towards the hand-

some lady could not escape the sharp eyes of Nadia and Boroffsky, and they asked themselves wonderingly what must have passed between them in past years to make him struggle so resolutely against the strange charm she exercised over old and young.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE answer which Nadia and Boroffsky had vainly sought will now be given to the reader.

In Moscow, about the year 1862, lived a family named Lutshisky, consisting of the discharged Colonel Michael Grigorievitch, his second wife, and their three children : a daughter by his first marriage, Elena, about eighteen years old, and two sons by his second wife, Vani and Andrew, two remarkably ill-bred and mischievous boys. Michael Grigorievitch had once been a dashing officer, but a hare-brained fellow, and like most of such people, he was very good-natured, though in a bad sort of way, having a very weak will and being incapable of a real, strong attachment. When he was made a colonel, at thirty-five years of age, he was over head and ears in debt, having spent the whole fortune of his first wife, who had died of a broken heart. His comrades liked him very much, because he held an open house and never refused a money gift ; but these doubtful qualities led him little by little to the loss of every notion about right and wrong, so that he at last mistook the regiment's cash for his own. After this, having been

discharged, he retired to Moscow, where no one knew anything about him. He was accompanied by his second wife, Cleopatra Andreievna, a daughter of the merchant Ivertshkoff, who, in spite of her mercantile extraction, had got no dowry but her pretty face. She had a very sharp character, held the reins of her home very tightly, and succeeded in a short time in getting into good society, through her husband's connections. His first wife had been a Countess Sokolnitzky, who had married him against her father's will; yet her only brother, Sergius Borissovitch, was very fond of his little niece, Elena. All the ambitious thoughts of her step-mother were concentrated on this child, her husband being nothing to her but a fool, to be constantly watched over to prevent his spending their last shilling. Unable to give her first-rate masters, she thought it necessary to place her at an elegant boarding-school, where her education might be finished. At school she passed for haughty but very clever, was praised by the masters and cordially detested by the other girls. When she left, at seventeen years of age, she did so without regret, and returned to her father's house without joy, his narrow and matter-of-fact life not realizing her ambitious dreams. Her position in her own family was rather strange: her father worshipping her, but not daring to take her part; her step-mother hating her, as all coarse natures hate more refined and elegant ones, and in her inmost

heart trembling before her. The girl treated her with a cold, scornful deference. The inmates of the house had given her the nickname of the "Imperial Mimosa," as she held herself like a being of a higher, different world, never seeming to observe the petty details of their daily life, nor to hear the reproaches with which her mother overwhelmed her father, and the inuendos which were thrust at herself. Cleopatra Andrievna delighted in paltry persecutions, done in an underhand sort of way; the consciousness of her own inferior position in the house made her indemnify herself by treating her step-daughter with a strange mixture of despotism and servility. Thus it was not strange if Elena wished most ardently to leave her father's house.

In the year 1862 she was for the first time taken to a ball at the Club de la Noblesse. She walked into the ball-room as quietly and indifferently as if this bright and noisy world had not the same mysterious witchery for her as for other girls. Her face, with its unusually severe expression, did not strike at first sight. The bewitching loveliness and rare purity of her features conquered the hearts slowly and unawares; but once conquered, her admirers grew enthusiastic, and pretended she was not like any living being, so ethereal and unearthly was her beauty. The young men, however, felt more alarmed than charmed at the somewhat haughty expression of her large and brilliant eyes, though one of

them, the youngest of all, made an exception to the rule, and fell at once a prey to her loveliness. This was Dmitry Koretzky, a student of twenty-two years of age, passionately devoted to arts and poetry. A quadrille with Elena and two or three bits of conversation with her sufficed to make him fall madly in love with her. His straight and supple figure, his open face, surrounded by auburn, curly hair, rather pleased her; but in her eyes he was only a boy, though he was her senior by four years, and it seemed as if she never got quite rid of this impression, even afterwards. Dmitry called upon her parents and became a frequent visitor at their house, though not very graciously received by them. After a very good club dinner, Michael Grigorievitch sometimes shook his hand kindly and gazed at him with tender, watery eyes, but generally speaking he treated him with distrust; while Cleopatra Andrejevna opposed the idea of a match with a man of twenty-two years of age with all her might. She watched them closely, and never left them alone; yet chance favoured Dmitry. He learnt that Elena often went to see a cousin of hers unaccompanied by her mother, and he contrived to see her there very frequently, without Cleopatra Andrejevna's ever hearing of it. Dmitry dreamt of nothing but marrying Elena, though he had not yet spoken the decisive word. Nor was it necessary. She knew perfectly well that he belonged to her, body and mind, and therefore did not deem it necessary to

step down from the airy heights in which she liked to dwell, but treated him somewhat coldly, allowing him to worship her in silence.

In this way long months might have passed, if an unexpected event had not taken place. Michael Grigorievitch one day met an old comrade of his, who had just arrived from Petersburg, named Alexander Vassilievitch Ordinzoff. He had left active service very early, made a brilliant match, and quickly reached honours and distinctions. Though a dull officer, he had turned out a clever bureaucrat. He was now forty-five years of age, privy councillor, and possessed, besides a high place in the official world, a large and handsome estate. He told Michael Grigorievitch that he had come to Moscow to look out for a bride, his wife having already been dead some years. It immediately occurred to Lutshisky that this would be a suitable match for his daughter. Cleopatra Andreievna jumped at this idea, and vowed that she would lead it to a happy conclusion. They invited Ordinzoff to dine with them, and he was much struck with the severe profile of the young girl, which put him in mind of his beloved Madonna, by Andrea del Sarto ; yet it would never have entered his head to ask a young girl of eighteen years of age to become his wife if her parents had not showed so openly how much they desired this match. Elena's behaviour, moreover, contributed to lead him into error. She had guessed her parents' views for her, but feeling per-

fectly sure of herself, she did not think it necessary to show her displeasure at Ordinzoff's assiduities, especially as they were proffered in such a delicate way as hardly to hurt her. Once, talking of the society at Petersburg, he saw how her eyes began to sparkle and dance.

"You must feel very dull here," he said to her; "you must long for something better, conscious, as you must be, of being born for power and a high, intellectual life."

"Believe me," she answered quietly, "I shall know how to find a way out of this dull life here, if I ever feel a longing for another one."

This answer pleased Ordinzoff, and on the following day he made his proposal to Cleopatra Andreievna.

"Do not tell it to her immediately," he concluded; "I want to prepare her for it, little by little."

Elena, however, felt that danger was drawing near, and now for the first time thought it necessary to mention Ordinzoff to Dmitry. The young man was perfectly thunderstruck. He poured the story of his love into her ear, with burning, passionate words, and received the trembling confession of her love. He resolved to leave at once for Biälastolby, to get his mother's consent. Anna Grigorievna, who knew of this passion of her son, had continually advised him not to bind himself at his age, and risk his whole future happiness in a moment of madness. He

therefore told Elena quite frankly that it would not be easy to get his mother's consent, and that he would never marry without it, having been accustomed from his very childhood to submit to her in everything.

So Elena resolved not to change anything in her behaviour towards Ordinzoff until Dmitry's return. She felt too sure of the final result, not to be able to wait patiently. But a whole month passed without any news from Dmitry. Cleopatra Andreievna, having been informed of his journey, had taken the best means of preventing any news from reaching Elena—she had simply intercepted his letter. This uncertainty began to prey on the young girl's health ; she now for the first time felt how dear he was to her ; the taunts of her step-mother made her smart, and her face began to show traces of her inward struggles. Once, after three weeks of vain expectation, she met Dmitry as she crossed the Kunetzky bridge in company with her mother. All her blood forsook her cheeks as she saw his cold, hostile gaze fixed on her face.

"It was Dmitry Koretzky," said Cleopatra Andreievna, with a sneer ; "how strange that he did not bow to us."

Elena did not answer, but as soon as she got home she sat down to write to him. She had not yet lost her faith in him. She reproached him most tenderly for his long silence, and asked him to meet her on the following evening at the house of that cousin

where they had met so often. Having sealed her letter, she gave it to her maid, and it was immediately deposited in the same place where Dmitry's letter was already kept. When Elena returned home from her party on the following evening, a change had taken place within her which influenced her whole life. A violent despair filled her heart, but she struggled against it, and her wounded pride helped her on to victory; but her inward life withered and shrivelled up like a tender rose-bud at the first night-frost.

On the following morning she told her mother that she was ready to marry Ordinzoff.

"This won't make me unhappy," she thought. And she tried to convince herself that a bright life was still in store for her, and that the ambitious dreams which had filled her mind since her very childhood would at last be fulfilled through this marriage. Ambition is the last refuge of a woman in the shipwreck of her love, if her nature is strong enough to allow her to be carried out of her all-engrossing grief. When Elena married Ordinzoff, she certainly did not know herself what she did, and it was not long before she regretted this hasty step, taken in the first moment of her overwhelming grief. A few months sufficed her to fathom her husband's character. Though he was not yet old, he had lost all interest in life, and cared for nothing but the narrow round of his personal affairs and relations, his

intellect having almost got rusty with turning continually in this small circle. His exterior was much fresher than his heart; and he expected his young wife to be quite ready to give him the only happiness he still cared for in life, his large fortune giving him the right to expect this of her.

Elena at first felt quite giddy. She understood that if she gave herself up to the hostile feeling with which her husband inspired her, she would quickly go downwards on a very frequented, but rather dirty road. Fortunately for her, she had a great deal of self-possession, and chose a more difficult, though less slippery way. She tried to subjugate this man, whom she hated most cordially, and she succeeded entirely. She set all his capacities and riches agoing; she played on his decrepit soul as on an instrument. She obliged him to work harder, to increase his riches, to become more celebrated, and began almost to love him as her own creation. His position in Petersburg did not correspond to his riches. He was considered an upstart, and had not yet been able to pass the barrier which separated the tshinovnik from the upper ten thousand. All this Elena understood very quickly. The hardly perceptible shades which separate the different societies in Petersburg did not escape her eyes, and she resolved at the same moment to raise her own position as high as she had once dreamt in her most ambitious dreams. The struggle itself seemed to

have a secret allurements for her, as she had the most important weapon in her hand, that is, a great deal of money.

The two first years of her married life were spent in studying the future operation field, where she was going to move her husband like a chess figure. She obliged him to go out a great deal and to work much more. She knew how to rouse his ambition, so that his subordinates wondered at this new trait of his character. Her uncle, Count Sokolnitzky, was a great help to her. Yet she had to display a great deal of tact, until the mysterious doors of the great world at last opened to her. For two whole years she did her best to strengthen her position, before opening her own house to the public. She had it freshly furnished, according to her own taste, but from her husband's money, and as a proof of her gratitude, she now declared to him that he did not need to accompany her when she went out, as he hated it so very much. She was now twenty-seven years old, and fancied she could do without this loathed satellite. She set up for a serious woman, knowing how dangerous would be the slightest imprudence in words or behaviour. She had always been passionately fond of reading, and now that her horizon had enlarged, she gave herself entirely up to this enjoyment. In the exclusive coterie of Princess Staratielsky her opinion was highly valued and her observations were frequently repeated. She had so entirely identified her-

self with the part she was acting that none belonging to a less intellectual circle than hers was ever received by her. She trembled at the bare thought of meeting Dmitry once more. Her indignation had long subsided, and she feared lest her love might reawaken once more. But when this meeting really took place—about three years after her marriage—Dmitry treated her with such an icy courtesy that her pride helped her to conquer some softer feeling.

Ordinzoff in the meantime submitted more and more to the influence of his wife. She took care that his appearance in those houses where she visited created a certain sensation. At her own receptions he only appeared for a few moments, and then always wrapped himself in deep silence, knowing that among the many different roads that lead to high honours, a mysterious silence, behind which deep and serious thoughts may hide, is one of the safest.

While Elena was thus ascending the social ladder, she forgot all about her Moscovian parents. All her mother's high-flown plans had been frustrated by the step-daughter's coldness. She always sent pretty little notes at every birthday, and splendid presents for her two brothers, but that was all. Thus the years rolled on, and she was getting quite reconciled to her fate, when her father, who had come to Petersburg on business, once mentioned the two letters that were still lying in his wife's drawer. She now

learned for the first time that Anna Grigorievna had consented to her marriage, and an awful despair overcame her, as well as a burning wish to be avenged. She shut herself up for a whole week, giving vent to her grief and to her longing after Dmitry ; all her hopes, ambitions, and plans for the future crumbled into dust and lost all their significance to her.

But good sense once more prevailed. Most fortunately Dmitry was abroad about this time. Elena understood that one imprudent word spoken to him, one step taken to gain his love, and the ladder which she had climbed so painfully would slip away under her, and her social position, which had taken four years to create, would be lost for ever. And she was able, when they met again, to exchange indifferent words and to retain the confession that trembled on her lips.

This victory over her own will hardened her. She again took up the part she was acting ; success loomed in the distance ; important personages crowded in her rooms ; a very high person had even been to private theatricals at her house. Ordinzoff seemed destined to occupy a high political post. She had but one source of disquiet—her husband's health seemed to be giving way.

Once, while playing cards in the English club, he had a fit. He recovered his consciousness on the following day, but he felt that the end was approaching, and set about putting his house in order. He

felt a sudden wish to punish his wife for her despotism and that latent scorn of himself which he had always suspected, even through her caresses. The sensual love he had felt for her disappeared in view of the grave, and he experienced a wicked joy in leaving her nothing but her lawful part, giving the whole of his large fortune, as well as his estate, Nikolsky, to his daughter by his first marriage. His friend, Peter Nicolaevitch, was appointed her guardian.

After the burial of her husband, Elena sat down to review her whole married life, and an awful emptiness seemed to be the signature of this life. In spite of her beauty, riches, and youth, she had never known love. In the whole wide world there was not one being dear to her, or to whom she was necessary. This awful sense of loneliness weighed heavily on her mind, and she shuddered at the future, condemned as she was to vegetate among petty cares, until she reached a cold and uncomfortable old age. She inquired after Dmitry's whereabouts. He had gone abroad again, and was not yet married.

Who knows? Perhaps her image still lived in his heart! With this vague hope she set out for Nikolsky.

CHAPTER XVII.

DMITRY began very conscientiously to redeem his pledged word to Elena. His anger towards her had subsided ; he even began to think it had been childish of him to feel so angry. Why care for vengeance, when the past had long ago ceased to interest him ? Why not treat her with that friendly indifference which always succeeds to great passions ? But while reasoning in this way, Dmitry, as so often happens, was deceiving himself ; he would not confess the true reason of the change which had taken place within him. The great charm which pervaded her whole person still spoke to his heart.

Elena did not even try to re-awaken the past, or to justify herself, though it would have been so easy to her. She still hoped to find some new foundation for a new intimacy, to awake his repentance and prove the strength of his despair. He had often told her that she had a manly intellect, was able to grasp subjects that were too high for the average part of her sex, and that he delighted in her society, even if the feelings which he now experienced for her were no longer the same as formerly. Her mind had

strengthened and hardened in her conflicts with the world, and it would have been impossible for her to take up her old standing-point. Who knows if she did not keep that confession for a later moment, just as card-players keep their trumps to the very last ; but in cards, as in real life, this calculation is often a mistake.

Be this, however, as it may, Dmitry felt quickly at ease at Nikolsky. Jenny treated him with a comical deference, as if he was the personification of some secret power ; he seemed to her, she hardly knew why, in possession of the highest authority, and she delighted in treating him familiarly, while all the rest bowed to him and almost feared him. Besides, the position which he had accepted was very much like that of a trustee of Jenny's. His uncle's answer came by return of post. He sent the procuration he had been asked for, but only on account of Jenny's wish, as he added, somewhat drily, for he was perfectly convinced that such a delightful young man as Mr. Gondsevsky had done his best to deserve the trust put in him. He did not want him to be discharged before he came himself, about the end of June, to look into the state of affairs. In the meantime this learned Mr. Gondsevsky may have been a great scholar and known all the numerous objects of an academical programme, but he had not the slightest idea of managing a plough, much less the people under him. Farming was done by him in the most

slovenly way, but it was difficult to say whether this was done out of stupidity or on purpose. Like a true Pole, he refused to give the slightest information; and when, at last, the letter of Peter Nicolaievitch obliged him to give way, his anger changed into obsequiousness, though it did not prevent him from answering sometimes very rudely.

Once—this was in the beginning of June—Jenny, who was sitting in some shady part of the garden with a book in her hand, suddenly heard Dmitry talking angrily and loudly behind her.

“I am not given to jesting when communicating my orders to you; please to remember this. I don’t accept your objections nor acknowledge your signature. This is what I’ll do with it!”

The answer of the steward was not audible to Jenny, but she heard the rustle of a torn paper, then the wicket-gate was quickly opened and shut again, and Dmitry stood before her, still struggling with his excitement.

“I did not know you were here,” he stammered, somewhat ashamed of having been overheard by her.

“I regret very much that our affairs——”

He did not allow her to finish. His face had quickly regained its composure.

“On the contrary, I am delighted to have the opportunity of conquering difficulties. I did not settle in the country to lead a lazy life, and in Biälas-tolby all goes so very smoothly.”

They began to pace the lime alley up and down, and Jenny listened attentively to all that he told her about the management of Nikolsky. He talked to her as to a grown-up person, thinking it right she should hear of serious things.

"But you can't care to hear about all this," he said, laughing.

A horse was now heard galloping behind the enclosure along which they were walking.

"That's your brother," she exclaimed. "I know Soliman's canter."

"Indeed? You discern even the noise of his horse's hoofs."

She blushed. They walked up to the enclosure, behind which Volodia had just stopped.

"Are you coming to us?" she asked.

Volodia looked gloomily from the one to the other.

"No," he answered nervously, though trying to look indifferent. "I only came out for a ride; I don't know why I came this way."

"Indeed! Fancy taking a ride in this heat!" said Jenny archly.

And in fact Volodia's face was quite damp.

"I have business at home," he said doggedly, though he would have been at a loss to say in what this business consisted.

"What a pity! We are all going to the Kurmi-loffsky meadow, and Nadia is coming with us."

Jenny turned away from Volodia, who was con-

tinually worrying his horse's neck with his stick, and, addressing Dmitry,—

“Come, let us return to the house,” she said; “the air is so sultry, I should not wonder at all if we were going to have a thunderstorm in the evening.”

The sky had indeed begun to assume those violet tints which are usually the result of the vapours from the dry earth rising towards it; an anxious, oppressive stillness, as the midday sleep after hard work, was weighing down weary nature.

Elena was not alone. When they entered the small, comfortable room, which used to be cool even during the most sultry heat, they found Tomiline and Boroffsky with her, along with a strange gentleman, who was reclining in an armchair near her, seemingly pouring the most astounding news in her ears. On seeing Jenny he started up, throwing away his cigarette, and walked up to her with a familiar courtesy.

“Delighted to introduce myself, my dear cousin,” he said, holding out his hand to her.

It was Boris Sergeïevitch, the son of Count Sokolnitzky. It would have been difficult to say how the latter had got such a son, he was so very different from him. He was of middle height, and his whole small person breathed strength and self-possession. He seemed to enjoy excellent health, to judge from his muscular body, his round, slightly flushed face, and youthful, black moustache drooping over

his somewhat haughty mouth. If it had not been for the weary expression of his large watery eyes, it would have been impossible to say that he had indeed left youth far behind him long ago, and was already on the way of getting stout. There was something coarse in his handsome features and in his hoarse voice, though it was evident that he had learnt to master it, and to behave faultlessly.

"I confess I did not expect to meet you as district marshal here," said Dmitry, after the introduction had taken place.

"Well, I've sown my wild oats, I fancy," answered the Count good-naturedly, biting his moustache, through which his haughty mouth was somewhat visible. "*Les temps sont durs; il faut retourner à la charrue.*"

Some time ago his career had come to an unexpected stop. He occupied a post in the household of one of the grand-dukes. His father's position and his own personal fortune seemed to promise him a sure and speedy career, and nothing augured the sudden catastrophe which took place. There had been some sharp collision with his august master, and Boris having left service in the first paroxysm of rage, set out suddenly for his father's estate, where he exchanged his brilliant dreams for the modest place of a district marshal. All this had been done with a certain ostentation, to give himself the airs of a victim. "As long as the opposition is only composed of

Ivans and Petroffs, they will never be feared," thought the young Count; "but if once a Count Sokolnitzky is seen among them, then——." And though he was a clever fellow, he really fancied that government would feel alarmed at this idea. But, alas! Petersburg with its forgetfulness surprises even those who have the worst opinion of it. It is true that Princess Varvara said, very seriously, "*Que c'est un symptome des plus graves,*" and that Countess Mary twice pitied the young count, calling him a victim "*de la politique.*" But even this affair was forgotten, and nothing remained to the young man but to go to Paris, there to get rid of the weight of his self-imposed banishment.

Elena listened willingly to all these outpourings of her cousin, having always valued her relations to the Sokolnitzkys. Boroffsky never openly contradicted him, though the hidden sarcasm of his words was rather tangible. Boris was fond of enlarging upon his favourite theme, that in Russia all is going to ruin; but now that Jenny had entered the room, he had only eyes for her; he did not even show how disgusted he was with Jack, her inseparable companion, as he burst in upon him, but bowed down to caress him. These caresses, however, did not seem very palatable to Jack; he growled and showed his white teeth, while Jenny listened with pleasure to the young man's flattering speeches. Suddenly, just before they were sitting down to dinner, Volodia made his appearance, awkwardly excusing himself

for having changed his mind. Jenny received him with an icy look, so he thought it necessary to show his displeasure by being as cold and caustic as possible. The Count, on the contrary, was in high spirits—chatted unceasingly during dinner, and almost sent poor Miss Finch into a fit, assuring her that London was the most awful hole in the world, and English ladies perfectly heartless creatures.

When they went out on the terrace after dinner, large leaden clouds were slowly covering the sky, chasing one another, driven onwards by the rising wind. The air was less close, yet still so charged with electricity that it was almost difficult to breathe. A heavy weight seemed to oppress the earth.

"We shall have to give up our excursion," said Elena, turning towards Tomiline.

On the far-off horizon pale flashes of lightning were seen, accompanied by a low, deep rolling of thunder.

"We shan't have a thunderstorm," answered Tomiline, looking at the sky; "the clouds are being driven over to the east. Let's wait for another hour, and then, if it does not rain, leave without minding the state of the weather.

"You have done just as I did," said the Count, addressing Dmitry: "you have left Petersburg, and have certainly the intention of standing at the next elections?"

"Not exactly like you," was the somewhat equivocal answer of Dmitry.

The Count looked pensively at the bluish smoke of his cigarette.

"We ought, all of us, to go and live some time in the country, 'pour infuser du sang nouveau.' It is necessary to raise——"

"What precious blood you would infuse," thought Dmitry; and shaking his thick, curly hair, he answered,—

"Well, I did not come to teach, but to be taught. I felt awfully bored at St. Petersburg with thrashing straw without ever getting to the kernel; in order to put a stop to this busy idleness, I came here to seek real work, be it ever so modest."

They were walking on the terrace, drawing near to the place where Elena was sitting.

"In the country you won't find real work," retorted the Count.

"Well," suddenly interfered Volodia, only for the pleasure of contradicting, "I think real work is always to be found there, where you find well *developed* people.

Tomiline laughed aloud, slapping the young man on the shoulder.

"Now there's another of those charming words of the new vocabulary of our age," he exclaimed; "formerly we had clever and stupid people; now-a-days they are developed! But what is so particularly developed within them?—the absence of brain, perhaps!"

"You mean to deny——" exclaimed Volodia excitedly.

"I don't mean to deny anything, my friend ; I only ascertain that the most fertile black-earth wheat does not grow before it is sown. Seed is everything, my dear ; culture is of no avail as long as there is no seed."

Boroffsky got up, and, turning towards the Count, said,—

"Do you see what a provision of good teaching we have here, while at Petersburg they consider our province as perfectly tainted ?"

The Count shrugged his shoulders.

"I wish you to find real work here," continued Nicholas Ossipovitch, addressing Dmitry ; "I do with my whole heart. Not official business, as you left it——"

"You have only to say a word to be district marshal in the place of Ouxoff," said the Count, eyeing Dmitry with inquisitiveness.

Dmitry stared a little at them both, then a mocking smile lit up his face.

"I am not looking out for any sort of office," he answered ; "but as you fancy the work I mentioned to be enigmatical, allow me to tell you in what light I consider it. There has been of late a great deal of talk about bettering the condition of our people, but this theme has always been discussed as if they were some sort of cattle breed. Such words as 'people,

masses,' may be very good in the abstract, but in reality they have no signification, for these masses are composed of living beings, differing essentially from one another. Can we wonder at their distrusting us? What have they ever got from us developed people, as my brother says? First, serfage; and then some newspaper rhapsodies, only catching at effect. The time has now come for us to enter their huts, to study their characters and wants, in order to offer them, not money, but a moral support. This I should call going among the people!"

"And put on the *poddievka*¹ and dirty boots!" exclaimed the Count, with a shrug. "This song has been sung at Moscow long ago!"

"There is no need of any sort of masquerade; we only ought to convince them that we look upon them as real human beings, and not playthings to fill up our leisure time. If we tried to get acquainted with every family of our former serfs, and helped them conscientiously whenever it is necessary, not only handing them over certain sums to satisfy our conscience, what result do you think we should achieve? Would this be such a very paltry work?"

"You would have to pull down a very huge wall, stone by stone," suddenly said Elena, who had been listening intently to Dmitry's words, though her eyes had remained cold and indifferent.

"Yet it would fall by-and-by, though I confess

¹ A sort of under-waistcoat.

that the worst of all Chinese walls are those that exist in imagination only."

He turned round. Nadia was standing behind him ; she had just come to Nikolsky, and for the first time her eyes rested on Dmitry without any hostile expression.

The wind was continually chasing new clouds onwards ; the sun was still high in the sky, but the clouds almost covered it entirely, only allowing some stray ray to lighten up the darkening leaves.

"Can we really go?" asked Elena, again addressing Tomiline.

Having got an affirmative answer, the ladies went to put on their hats. Boroffsky and Dmitry remained alone on the terrace.

"Do you know," said the first, smiling, "that you have been saying just enough to make you rank with the malcontents ; it would suffice only to change one word or the other."

"I don't allow any one to change my words," retorted Dmitry sharply.

The carriages were at the door. The young Count sat down in the pony-basket beside Jenny, and, seizing the reins with the air of a perfect driver, he began whipping the horse. But the little Swede showed signs of revolt, and, to his great disgust, Jenny took the reins out of his hands. The rest of the society settled down in a high *char-à-banc* of quite an antediluvian aspect. The troika harness

and the red sleeves of the coachman contrasted most strangely with the foreign look of this carriage, which here and there had supplied the place of the old-fashioned manor-linerka, and which sometimes put one in mind of Noah's ark.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE Kurmiloffsky meadow was ten versts distant from the manor-house. A big oak wood stretched along the whole road. It was a hilly neighbourhood, cut up here and there with small hollows. A fresh breeze from the Volga wafted coolness hither, even on hot summer days. The sky was still overcast, but the wind had ceased, and the thunderstorm was retreating towards the steppe on the other side of the river. From time to time its rollings were heard in the distance, solemnly and measuredly breaking in upon the evening stillness. Alarmed nature was quieting down, and the receding tempest carrying off the sultry air of this warm June day. Tomiline was right, after all,—the weather was clearing up.

The troika had hardly turned into the wood, when a man with a startled face sprang out of it. It was Gondsevsky, who bowed low, as if to hide his face, and glided past them. At the same moment, another man turned back towards the interior of the wood, quickly disappearing behind the trees.

“That’s our land-surveyor!” cried Dmitry. “It is

Vassili, the son of our priest. What can he have been plotting here with Gondsevsky ? ”

“That face of your steward does not please me,” observed Tomiline, addressing Elena.

“Now I fancy that if we were to search this place thoroughly,” said Boroffsky, “we should find the answer to this question of yours, Mr. Koretzky.”

“I hope to unravel this mystery without the help of the police,” retorted Dmitry. “Do you know,” he went on, turning to Elena, “that I tore up to-day the agreement which Gondsevsky had concluded with the peasants, which would have been the ruin of your forests? Happily it was not signed.”

“I don’t think your proceeding was quite legal,” said Boroffsky, laughing.

“On my own estate I should probably not have acted thus, but I could not give up the forest for a question of legality. Besides, I don’t think it will be so very difficult to treat directly with the peasants. I have already tried to explain different things to them.”

“It is harvest time, now, so the forest does not run any risk,” said Tomiline.

“What has become of your brother ? ” asked Elena of Dmitry. “I’ve not seen him since we left the house.”

At this moment Jack’s loud barking was heard behind the carriage. Volodia, who had been riding in the wood, had reached a place where the thick underwood embarrassed Soliman’s feet, and wishing

to show himself before Jenny as a dashing rider, he had suddenly jumped out on the high road. But he only succeeded in frightening the little Swede, who reared and plunged, while Boris eagerly got hold of the reins, too happy to act the part of Jenny's saviour. Jack bounced on Soliman; and Volodia would certainly have come to a bad end, if the venerable age of his horse had not vouched for his meeting this sudden occurrence with perfect indifference.

"How imprudent you are! Really, it is impossible to ride in this way!" exclaimed the Count angrily; but Jenny only frowned a little, as if she had not seen Volodia at all. This provoked him much more than the angry speech of the Count, and poor Soliman had to pay for both. He lashed him angrily, and starting off at an irregular gallop, soon disappeared on the road.

After half an hour's drive, they arrived at a pretty large glade in the forest, surrounded by groups of trees, behind which a big meadow sloped down towards a little river—the same which passed through Biälastolby. Here it flowed very quietly; but farther on it grew more impetuous, until it disappeared behind a sharp curve of the ground. A bare tableland, rising slowly, like a huge green tent, from the very sides of the glade, entirely closed the view on one side, like a massive stone wall. It was covered with scanty, dried-up grass on the top,

through which a yellow clay was visible. At this moment it was sharply lighted up by the slanting rays of the setting sun. The shadows in the forest were lengthening, and a thin mist was hovering over the meadow. A delightful perfume of fresh hay pervaded the air, while the labourers in their white shirts,—the nearest village was one of Tartars,—and the women in their many-coloured dresses, were raking the hay together and putting the finishing touch to their day-task. The glade had not yet been mowed, and the rich, dense steppe grass parted like waves under the horse's hoofs, as if ready to swallow them up in their juicy, green depths. Jenny declared her intention of going close to the haymakers, to watch them at their work, having been told that the Tartar girls were great beauties, dressed in a different fashion from Russian girls, and wore real gold necklaces. The Count proposed to have the girls up into the glade after their day's labour, and seemed rather desirous of making a more intimate acquaintance with them; but the ladies would not hear of it. Elena declared that she hated those "*paysanneries de conversion*," and that the Tartars, who were, generally speaking, very shy, were totally unknown to her, as she had been so short a time in the neighbourhood.

"Another Chinese wall!" thought Boroffsky.

The young girls walked down to the meadow, accompanied by the Count and Tomiline, while Volodia remained sulkily beside Boroffsky. Dmitry

and Elena felt rather embarrassed on being thus left together, and began slowly walking back into the forest, hardly knowing why.

"You seemed to doubt my projects very much just now on the terrace," began Dmitry. "Do you consider them nothing but vain dreams?"

"Well, yes, I confess it. Why sacrifice your youth to such delusions? You have a great capacity for work, and I should be delighted to see you on the right road to honour. If you wished so, I might even help you a little in the beginning."

Dmitry laughed aloud.

"Thank you so very much; but I have no ambition at all," he answered frankly; "at least, not in the way ambition is understood in Petersburg. I am very modest, but at the same time very proud of the task I have put to myself."

"I can't understand you! How can you be satisfied with achieving such a paltry success as awaits you here, with your schools and other unprofitable schemes?"

She stopped short under an old oak tree, whose crooked, naked branches rose sturdily against the open sky. They looked as if ready to wrestle with snowstorms and tempests, in order to protect their tender young foliage. Her face had brightened, a slight flush rose to her cheeks, and her eyes were sparkling.

"You think it is impossible to be useful without

having an official character, do you?" cried Dmitry eagerly. "Can't you work because you are a private gentleman?"

He wanted, above all, to convince this experienced woman of the world of the false notions which her mercenary marriage had put into her head as to people and public life.

"Your brother might; for, in spite of his youthful enthusiasm, he will turn out an excellent farmer, I know. But you, Dmitry Alexandrovitch, you have not the right to shut yourself up in the petty rounds of such a life! To devote oneself exclusively to one's estate and family is not to live, is not to do anything worth living for!"

"You forget," he exclaimed, and his voice trembled with suppressed emotion, "that it was you, Elena Michailovna, who destroyed for me this family life of which I dream no longer."

He was standing before her, his head touching the lowest branches of the oak, his hazel eyes burning with indignation. The sudden turn which their conversation had taken made her feel unequal to the task of hiding the truth from him any longer. Oh, if he could but know what she would have given to be able to live that family life, of which she spoke so scornfully, with him! know how high above the tracks of daily, petty cares she would have raised their married life!

"Do you still upbraid me in your heart, Dmitry?"

she asked quietly ; " did you never guess the truth ? "

She stopped short, looking straight into his eyes, searching anxiously for that trembling expectation which she hoped to find in them ; but their fire was already quenched, and nothing but a mocking smile hovered on his lips.

She told him all—the deceit of her step-mother, and the dreariness of her own life. There was such a true ring of deep-felt sorrow in her words that he could not but believe her.

" Thus it happened that my whole life was changed," she concluded, in a soft, almost beseeching tone ; " those two intercepted letters ruined my happiness and made you look upon me as guilty during ten long years."

But the chord which she hoped to touch had been broken long ago. He spoke a few kind words to soothe her agitation ; but, strange to say, he who had upbraided her so violently for so many years did not feel the slightest joy at her justification. Yet her quick ear did not detect the indifferent ring in his voice. She wanted so passionately to see the past rise from the dead, and had reckoned so firmly on this explanation, that she tried to deceive herself.

They had wandered on to the border of the wood, and stood gazing down at the large meadow stretched out at their feet. The sky was clearing, the labourers' scythes were sparkling in the rays of

the setting sun. Jenny had erected a haystack, with her cousin's aid, and was now standing on the top of it, throwing down whole armfuls of soft, perfumed hay on the heads of her companions. Nadia felt the infection of her gaiety : she joined her on the top of the stack, and both were soon obliged to defend themselves against the attacks of the gentlemen. Even Boroffsky partook of the general mirth ; Volodia alone stood aloof, playing with his whip.

"How heartily they enjoy themselves, and how old I feel!" cried Elena, gazing at them; "those rural pleasures do not suit me. We feel out of place here at this haymaking, and I wonder why I planned this drive!"

She smiled almost shyly as she said these words, for she felt the sharp contrast between her youthful appearance and the immense void of her heart. They walked down to join the others.

"Well, the Tartars are not at all what I thought," said Jenny, jumping down from her height; "they are as like Russians as two drops of water, though the men wear only shirts and the women have no sarafan on. Their dresses are not pretty, and they have no gold necklaces.

"There are few things that are not alike in the world," said Elena sententiously.

"Nicholas Ossipovitch, I propose to ascend that height," said Jenny, pointing to the bare hill, overlooking the meadow; "the view is said to be lovely

from that place, and all places hereabout are historical, you know. Feodor Vassilievitch tells me that Pugatsheff is sure to have stood somewhere here, when——”

“He fled before Mikhaïlson, on leaving Kazan,” interrupted Tomiline.

“But it is rather late, is it not?” asked Elena.

It was, however, decided to climb the hill, as every one declared it might be done in half an hour.

“You are sulky, I think; why so?” asked Jenny, as she passed near Volodia, who still kept aloof.

“Vladimir Alexandrovitch is waiting for another opportunity of showing us his horsemanship,” said Boris.

The young man started.

“Well, some people are fond of throwing hay at each others’ heads,” he said sharply, with a heart-breaking glance at Jenny; “others not.”

“At your age it can’t be a pleasure; of course not,” said Boris.

Jenny was silent; she only raised her eyebrows a little, and passed quickly on.

“Come along and have a look at the platform on which Pugatscheff is said to have stood once,” said Boroffsky to Volodia; “these remembrances must be dear to you also.”

“You may look at it as much as you like; I won’t,” cried Volodia, so loudly as to be heard by everybody. “If you are going to wait here for another

Pugatscheff to come, you will have time enough to admire it."

Saying this, he went to look for Soliman, and rode homewards.

Jenny only shrugged her shoulders when these words reached her ears ; yet she found it rather difficult to listen to the young Count's gay sayings.

Nadia had remained a little behind with Boroffsky.

"You are ascending this with a certain solemnity, I suppose," he said to her, in a half whisper, "for it is the classical soil of a Russian revolt. Here his adherents lived ; and who knows on what hillock the watchfires were lighted at the time of Sdenka Rasina ? We'll live long enough, perhaps, to hear our people sing once more : 'Down on our mother earth,'—our Marseillaise !"

She felt a chill creeping along her back as Boroffsky spoke those strange words.

"I only fear," she whispered, looking reprovingly at him, "that if this happened, the present judges would be found on the accused bench ; and then it is to be feared that the judgments would be as swift as unjust."

"Do you know, I sometimes wonder how we can live on as quietly as we do, we who are only such a handful of people amid this mysterious, sleeping power of the present world. We have dynamite instead of pillows under our heads."

"I can't understand," she said, stopping short and

looking straight into his eyes, "how you, with your clear intellect, can talk of such grave subjects in this eternally railing tone. Your present place—you know this very well—is only a step on the ladder leading upwards."

The scoffing expression vanished from his face.

"Alas, Nadeshda Sergeïevna, I have a much greater right to put the opposite question to you. How can you, with your clear intellect, not understand that this ladder leading upwards is very much like the squirrel's cage; is it not hard for us, who see so much farther than others, because our horizon is so much larger, to be dragged on by boys, who are destroying everything with the heedlessness of ignorance? We must keep aloof until that time comes when people will understand that boys are good for nothing. For you know, I suppose, that it is only with us in Russia that this fifth class, this new sort of aristocracy, exists, which every one worships nowadays—I mean the young generation. Well, what has it produced after fifteen years of existence? Women who dabble in literature and walk about with short hair. But let us go on; we are lingering too far behind."

Nadia was going to answer, but she felt an inward distrust of the man: his cold intellect, acting at the same time as dissolving powers and as a chemical reaction, attracted and repulsed her equally.

"And why do these apostles of an unknown

faith call people on to daring exploits? Only that some Kusma Mironoff, whose existence they discovered in some small tract, may live a little more comfortably in this world. What do I care for Kusma Mironoff? He is as indifferent to me as a Red Indian. But when these upstarts succeed in getting on, their first wish is to strangle their superiors, and that's why we see so many such boxing heroes, who strip their brethren more thoroughly than the best robber would do."

"Well, now I understand why you are so fond of making accusing speeches."

"Now, you understand, do you, indeed?" he laughed. "But you are angry with me for breaking your idols so ruthlessly, I dare say. Yet I worship the same idols, though in another spirit. To me they are only painted idols, fit for the great masses, but behind them I see that true, powerful strength by which we are all moved onwards, though it be only like tools. Life would be larger and loftier if we did not stick in the mire of prejudices. The road leading on to a higher development is no easy garden path; on the contrary, it is a highly dangerous one, and it is no misfortune if weak people break their necks going on it. Who knows, perhaps the hour of battle is not so far off! But, however different may be the way on which we reach this high road, we can shake hands as staunch friends on it, for neither you nor I will turn giddy on these heights."

Nadia had again been listening intently to him, and a strange feeling overcame her while he poured these passionate words into her ears. It seemed to her as if they had already been spoken to her by another voice, in quite different circumstances, and this voice, which had also had a great attraction for her, was that of Neradovitch.

They had now reached the top of the hill. The sky had entirely cleared up, only towards the east, where the declivity sloped down to the river, a darkening mist was hovering on the border of the horizon, the steep shore took yellowish tints in the distance, and the boundless meadow-like plain of the steppe behind the Volga was swallowed up in grey half-darkness. Gloomy clouds were standing like impervious walls, watching over the far-off darkness, while from time to time flashes of lightning illuminated the curve of the river, and fiery waves seemed to dance on the dark surface of the waters. For a short moment the whole landscape was alive with flames, to be again steeped in utter obscurity. The white turrets of the town, hitherto invisible, now stood out like spectres against the dark horizon.

They were all gazing in silent admiration at this lovely picture, hoping to see another flash lighten up the scene, but it was in vain; the thunderstorm had exhausted itself, and the deep and solemn night of the steppe was slowly descending over the weary

landscape. They walked silently back to the glade. It was too late now for the guests to think of returning to Nikolsky, so they parted, some of them going back to town, others to Biälastolby, with the exception of Boris, who was staying with Elena, as he was on the road to his father's estate.

Dmitry placed Nadia in the tarantass.

"How imprudent you are," he said, observing that she had come without a plaid; "the night fog is dangerous here." And he wrapped her carefully in his own overcoat, in spite of her eager protestations. There was something of a father's tenderness in his care of her, and there was certainly no anger in his eyes, as he shielded her against the dampness of the night.

They soon reached the open field. After the thunderstorm the night was pure and fragrant, saturated with the perfume of wormwood and rye-corn. They were reclining silently in the carriage, without looking at each other; but the same question was whirling through their brains, why they who might have been so closely united felt so strangely hostile to each other.

At last Dmitry broke the silence.

"What did Boroffsky say to you?" he asked gaily; "some revolutionary idea, clothed in official words, of course, was it not?"

Nadia was silent. She disliked his expressing in words what puzzled and perplexed her so much.

She raised her eyebrows, and a severe expression again crossed her face.

"Oh, Nadia! Nadia!" he exclaimed eagerly, "why are you so strange? How shall I ever convince you that I am no enemy of yours?"

For the first time in his life he had called her Nadia, and this sounded as an offence in her ears, though Volodia had called her so from the first day of their acquaintance. She turned away from him, hiding her face in the corner of the tarantass. At a sharp turning of the road the young moon, standing high in the heavens, shed its silvery light on her sweet face; but what it read there, whether the angry look had disappeared or not, remained a secret, for the moon seldom shares its observations with us poor mortals.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE yearly spring inundations of the Volga almost always occasioned cases of malignant fever at Biälastolby and in the neighbouring villages. The peasants did not care very much for it, so long as the victims were not too numerous; they did not even erect an hospital of their own, on account of the town being so near. This year, however, the epidemic was singularly obstinate, and did not even cease at the approach of summer.

On the morning after the drive to the Kurmi-loffsky meadow, the new schoolmaster, Bruskoff, presented himself to Dmitry, in order to tell him that things were beginning to look rather serious, typhus having broken out in different families.

"How can that be, Alexander Tomitsch?" said Dmitry, astonished; "the district doctor was here yesterday, and did not mention it."

"He understands nothing about it; he is a German. I know all the symptoms; there is not the slightest doubt it is typhus."

"Well, then, the sick must be separated at once from the rest."

"Just as your nobility pleases," answered Bruskoff, with a tinge of irony.

"Then let us start at once."

And he walked off towards the village, accompanied by the schoolmaster.

Bruskoff was a man of twenty-two years of age, very thin, but very healthy, with a long and beardless face; his nose was long, somewhat sharp, his teeth very strong, and his squinting eyes quick and lively. The form of his head put one in mind of a young thoroughbred setter. He spoke abruptly, a little sharply, and his words were mostly accompanied by a short, noiseless laugh. What most pleased Dmitry in him was his self-confidence and cleverness.

As they entered the village, they saw at the door of the schoolhouse a telega, in which lots of broken and spoiled utensils were piled up. Beside it stood an old man, in a torn linen overcoat, with a lean face, and such a weak aspect that he seemed ready to drop down every moment. Four little children, with dull looks, were crowding round him.

"Now Batushka," asked Bruskoff scoffingly, "are you going into other lodgings? He was dislodged," he continued, addressing Dmitry, "because he had entirely overflowed the house with his filth and his posterity. So happy journey to you."

Old Sikofantoff, the discharged schoolmaster, on perceiving Dmitry, walked up to him.

"I have the honour to greet your nobility," he said, in a broken voice ; "I am going to look out for another resting-place. Thank you a thousand times for your kindness to me and my little children."

Dmitry turned away from this wretched old beggar, who had himself been the cause of his misfortune. He ordered him to come up to his house in the afternoon, intending to give him a few rubles.

There were already six cases of fever in the village. The peasants looked wonderingly, almost distrustfully, at Dmitry as he entered the sick rooms.

"Why do you want to cure grandfather?" one young girl asked of him ; "he has finished his earthly career—it is time for him to leave us."

Here the old man raised himself on the stove, and thanked Dmitry in a voice which proved as much his wonder at his visit as his indifference in sight of death.

"I do not suffer at all," he said ; "I only feel hot and thirsty. I am so giddy."

Dmitry resolved to put the patients into the empty wing of the manor-house, which had formerly been used for the weavers' gatherings during serfage. But no one seemed grateful for this generous resolution. He could hardly bring the sick to consent to this change, while the healthy members were perfectly indifferent to the danger arising from keeping them at home. Dmitry was greatly astonished when he observed how much more effect the sharp, dry tones

of Bruskoff had than his own soft words ; harshness seemed quite natural to them, while care and kindness struck them as something uncongenial. There was only one family which he was glad to have visited, that of a young Khozain,¹ the only workman of the family. His wife and sisters, who had the whole care of the household weighing on them, wept in a most heart-rending way, and proved very grateful when Dmitry explained to them that, in case of a happy issue of the sickness, the Khozain would return to them in a fortnight, entirely cured, so that he might do his harvest quite easily.

Here he found Nadia along with Vassili.

"You have come to visit the sick!" she said, with a slight tinge of distrust in her voice, though the former scoffing was this time no longer audible in it.

"I hope you won't attribute it exclusively to curiosity," he said coldly, turning quickly towards Bruskoff, and giving him the necessary orders to send for the doctor and medicines from town.

"The doctor won't be of great use, I fear," the latter answered, as he left the room.

Dmitry walked home with Nadia.

"I can't understand your liking for this man

¹ Khozain, that is to say, the head of the house, or the administrator. Generally speaking this important position is occupied by the grandfather, or if he is dead, by the eldest brother, or by some other member who is a good manager.

Vassili ; he is an empty-headed fellow, and a drunkard into the bargain," he said to her.

"That is my business," she answered, with blazing eyes, and throwing back her head ; "I don't want your advice."

"Just as you like, of course ; I only warn you that you might risk seeing him grow too familiar. By the bye, do you know the sad result of another good work of ours ?"

And he told her all the details of his meeting with old Sikofantoff.

"You don't care, of course," he concluded, somewhat ironically ; "let the whole world perish, provided we find a schoolmaster of advanced ideas. Weak beings are condemned beforehand to die ; that's nature's law."

She did not answer, though his raillery vexed her ; she was even half-inclined to put the question whether it would be quite impossible to achieve any sort of success in life without sacrificing all that is weak and unfit for work.

Twenty-five rubles proved, however, a great comfort to poor old Sikofantoff.

Anna Grigorievna did not oppose Dmitry's wish to turn the empty wing of the manor-house into an hospital, though Dr. Findeisen resisted it strongly, fearing the contagion for her. She was not timid by nature, and had, moreover, high ideas about the duties of large landed proprietors. During the

following days Nadia and Dmitry had their hands so full that they also forgot all about the infection. The huts were all cleaned and fumigated, in spite of the violent protests of the inhabitants, and thus a stop was put to the spreading of the illness. But the result of these proceedings was a most curious and unexpected one. The peasants fancied that Dmitry had no idea of the worth of money, as he not only spent much upon them, but even gave twenty-five rubles to the former schoolmaster, and resolved therefore to dupe him as much as possible.

They began at once. Hardly a day passed without some devastation or infraction of concluded arrangements taking place. In carting manure to the manor land, for instance, the drivers always put every fifth load on their own ground; the peasants' geese grazed quite comfortably on the master's fields; the ploughing was done most indifferently. Dmitry disliked quarrelling about trifles, but he also knew that to pass all these misdoings would be to lose the last chance of power on the estate. Twice he tried what a good scolding might do; but when on some fine morning, the whole drove of peasants' horses were let loose on the hay-fields in the manor forest, he ordered them all to be shut up in his own courtyard. For two whole days the peasants gave no sign of life, hoping he would give way, but as the horses were wanted for harrowing, they appeared on the third day, begging humbly to

be pardoned. Dmitry inflicted some very moderate fine ; but this was followed by an outburst of sobs and clamours.

"How can we work, little father—we your poor orphans?" they cried, dropping on their knees.

They would not believe that Dmitry intended to insist on his rights, and always expected him to give way. He never showed any sign of impatience, but at last ordered his carriage to take him to the justice of the peace. Then they submitted ; but the fact of their having been mistaken in him exasperated them, and they perpetrated a series of wicked tricks, so cleverly planned that it was impossible to prove their guilt.

Beyond the ravine, on a large glade in the forest stood an oak tree, of which the age was perfectly unknown, and which was highly valued by Anna Grigorievna, as a beautiful specimen of Biälastolby's old forest trees. One day the gamekeeper brought the news that the hollow of this old tree had been filled up with straw in the night and entirely burnt down. Dmitry felt very sorry, and started off at once to have a last look at the remains of his favourite. On the road leading to the ravine he met the starost Jacob, arm in arm with Vassili. They were going down the slope of the hollow, without observing Dmitry, chatting and laughing.

"How is it that the starost is so very intimate with the priest's son?" asked Dmitry of the gamekeeper who accompanied him.

"They are a pair of so-called spongers," answered the other, with a contemptible shrug.

Dmitry had not yet reached the place where the smoking trunk of the oak was lying stretched out, as if mown down, when he found Volodia, lazily reclining on the moss, his arms folded under his head.

He had his double-barrelled gun beside him, along with his game-bag, while his black setter, Nero, heated and trembling, was gazing at his master with weary, twinkling eyes.

"What are you doing here?" cried Dmitry.
"Have you been out shooting?"

"And are you again walking over to Nikolsky?" asked Volodia, raising himself on one arm and gazing desolately at Dmitry; "you go there almost every day, it seems to me."

"And you have quite given up going there, have you not?"

"I shall never return thither," he cried, starting up; "you may court that girl as much as you like, I don't care."

The jealousy of Volodia struck Dmitry as something so absurd that he could not refrain from laughing aloud.

"You are talking in your sleep, I think; you were first jealous of Sokolnitzky, now of me!"

"I jealous of the count! how ridiculous, that filthy aristocrat!"

"Well, my dear representative of liberal youths,

allow me to ask you how your convictions could permit you to kill those poor little birds," and he pointed to the filled game-bag; "you know, I suppose, that shooting is prohibited in June."

"Only two ducks and three thrushes; is it worth while mentioning them?" answered Volodia, slightly confused.

"Well, I confess that a duck is no very important creature; but as there is only a fortnight wanting to St. Peter and Paul's Day, you might have waited till then. This law is perfectly justifiable, as you must yourself confess, and you ought at least to set a good example to your inferior brethren in your quality of an enlightened radical."

Volodia did not answer; he gazed somewhat uneasily from the game-bag to the dog, that was wearily shuffling its downy tail before him.

"Do you know that in doing this you follow the example of your much-hated nobility, who firmly believe that certain laws do not exist for them; in spite of this, you utter your high-flown radical sentences with an air of perfect conviction."

"What nonsense you are talking; these are the well-known artifices of reactionaries: they like to place themselves on the narrow ground of lawfulness, in order to shut other people's eyes to the full light of true convictions."

"Conviction is a grand word, my dear fellow, and you must learn to discern between those convictions

that have hardened in the fire, like steel, and those that are drawn out of every fresh morning paper. And now, my fiery young champion of the oppressed race, tell me what you have done since you came to Biälastolby to relieve one case of real want? or do you fancy the present season is only to be devoted to pretty young girls?"

"What can I do? Don't you know that all our work is still in the future? This is really too bad of you."

"Now, come along with me; I'll show you what our oppressed brethren have done to our dear old oak tree."

They walked about three hundred paces onwards. The excitable nature of the young man rose in tumult on witnessing this act of barbarity.

"What brutes!" he exclaimed, aghast.

"No, they are not brutes, only children. After a great deal of mirth, children cry; so do the peasants, in their relations to us, pass from dull indifference to senseless acts of vengeance."

The two brothers walked home in silence.

CHAPTER XX.

EARLY on the following morning Dmitry rode over to Nikolsky. He went there pretty often now.

Not finding any one in the hall, he walked upstairs and knocked at Elena's morning-room.

"May I come in, Elena Michailovna? Nikolsky is a perfect desert to-day. I see no one hereabout."

"Come in; I shall be delighted to see you," she answered from within.

He walked in, and found her at her small writing-table.

"Excuse me a moment," she said, inviting him to sit down on the small sofa near her. "I shall have finished directly. These hours I usually devote to writing."

He involuntarily followed the quick movement of her pretty hands, admiring the precise lines, which flowed unceasingly from her pen. Her hand-writing was firm—a little angular.

"I am writing to one of the cleverest and most influential persons in Petersburg," she said, after having

filled the fourth page of her letter, "Mikhail Vladimirovitch Tshistonolsky ; you know him, of course ?"

"Only by hearsay."

"I've mentioned you to him, among other things. I am sure he would value you as you deserve. I do not yet give up the hope of seeing you at work one day, at real work, not at such work as is only to be found in the ant-hills of bureaucratism. He answered me with a phrase that put me in mind of the '*Revue des Deux Mondes* : ' *Les gouvernements ne doivent pas laisser les talents en j'achère, ils tournent à l'aigre.*"

"Comme le lait pendant l'orage," laughed Dmitry.

Conversation between them always took a jesting turn. Dmitry delighted in this new friendship, which seemed to grow up pure and true as it had never yet existed between man and woman. The solidity of such a friendship must however be doubted when other feelings have previously united the same people. In Elena's heart the old love was ready to flash up with renewed strength ; as a woman of the world she was perfectly conscious of it, tried to wrestle with it, and to hide it before all eyes in the very depths of her soul, but when she was quite sincere with herself—and such moments occurred pretty often—she dwelt with rapture on the time when she would be the wife of the beloved man. But alas ! to enjoy the society of a clever woman and to love her were two quite different things with him. He delighted in

her cleverness, admired her beauty and the elegance which pervaded her whole person, but did not get any further.

"Yet, I do not give up the hope of convincing you," she continued, reclining in the soft, low arm-chair. "*Je rêve pour vous les grandes ambitions, les vraies* ; it always seemed to me as if life was only worth living in the upper regions."

'These ambitions, as you call them, do not consist of anything else than the wish to outstrip others. Do you see, Elena Michailovna, it always seems to me as if people at St. Petersburg did nothing but erect high scaffolds, beautifying them so that they may be taken for the house itself ; in the meantime no foundation has been laid. Now, tell me yourself, would it not be more rational to collect materials for building, than to elevate these scaffolds ? "

"*Si je comprends votre apologue*, you mean to say it is better to stay in the country, provincial life representing the material for building. Very flattering indeed ; I only fear this material would stain our hands."

It was no easy thing to dispute with Elena, but then Dmitry did not want to dispute. Who knows whether his head was not a little turned with all the flatteries she said to him.

"I very, very much regret to destroy your illusions," she continued. "We'll take up this conversation once more, in two months, when you will know

every one here ; then you'll know yourself what provincial life signifies. I, for instance, began with receiving every one in the most gracious way. J'ai cherché une perle parmi ces huîtres, and except Boroffsky, with whom it is easy to talk . . . Why do you think that we get on so well together ? Because we are of the same world, the same breed, we think and feel otherwise than they do here."

And the look which she bestowed upon him told still more clearly than her words how much she valued this affinity. The door was suddenly opened, and Jenny appeared to announce that lunch was ready. Her real aim in coming was, however, to try and learn why Volodia had ceased to visit them, and she contrived to do it with that ingenious skill with which girls seem to be endowed from the very nursery.

"You made an exception to the rule in favour of Boroffsky," said Dmitry, following the ladies to the dining-room.

"I certainly do not find him sympathetic ; for he is not single-minded enough. . He is very much like those changing silks, that look quite different, according to the side from which you look at them—du bleu gendarme sur du fond rouge et même très rouge."

"What strange eyes he has," observed Jenny : "so dull and pale ; yet how intently he gazes at you ; serpents ought to have such eyes, I think."

"Yet I forgive him all on account of one thing. He has surrendered to an all-absorbing, disinterested feeling ; here you see the result of contradictions : Boroffsky is over head and ears in love with your Cousin Nadia."

"Boroffsky in love with Nadia !" cried Dmitry.

"Did you never observe this?" asked Jenny slyly.

"He'll marry her, and I shall be delighted," said Elena.

Dmitry was quite dumbfounded ; now he understood for the first time why Nadia had treated this sharp and cool man in such an enigmatical way. He felt shaken and unsettled, but deciding that it was after all no business of his, he again addressed Elena, and was quickly immersed into one of those conversations in which she delighted to draw sparks of wit from her interlocutors without ever disclosing a thought of her own.

Dmitry left immediately after lunch. A sharp west wind was moving the waves of the ripening rye. Fleecy clouds were projecting dark shadows on the ground, which dissolved again quickly in the rays of the reappearing sun. The fields were deeply steeped in rich colours, from the pale green of the wheat to the golden tints of the rye ; the bluish stripes of rich oats alternated with the large, dark-green blades of the barley, while the silver leaves of the buck-wheat disappeared under its pale pink blossoms. Dmitry

did not meet a living soul on his way to Biälastolby. There was no trace of human life in the steppe, as if nature wanted to do her great work of preparation for the coming harvest in utter solitude. He put his horse up at the mill, having some business to transact there; some reconstructions that had been going on for some time seemed to him to advance very slowly. They wanted to be looked after. Having finished this matter, he walked home through the ravine which led into the garden. There the grass had not yet been cut, and whole crowds of insects were buzzing and murmuring underneath it; around him all bloomed so richly, the air was so saturated with perfume, that he felt almost oppressed under the weight of this many-coloured splendour. An unknown languor overcame him before this luxurious blossoming of summer.

In the meantime he followed out the thoughts that had been awakened within him during his stay at Nikolsky. Though he wanted to tell himself that Nadia's marriage was quite an indifferent matter to him, yet the idea of it had upset him. He passed the small bridge over the river, and following its steep shores, walked slowly into the garden. The footpath crept along the declivity, and led directly to the arbour which Volodia had so much praised to Jenny on her first visit to Biälastolby. It consisted only of some birch trunks, fixed in the soil with the roots upwards, around which Virginian

creepers had woven a dense texture; the white trunks, looking from afar off much like the remains of a church, stood very distinctly out against the tender foliage of the lime and oak trees. The view before him was not very large, but there was something mysteriously alluring in that wavy, shadowy wilderness into which the eye dived from the steepness of the hollow.

Drawing near to the harbour, Dmitry heard the loud and eager voice of Boroffsky. The words as yet only reached him by snatches, but the higher he ascended, the more distinct they grew, and, much against his will, he heard all that he explained to Nadia, who was sitting with him in the harbour. They could not see him, the projection of the shore hiding him from them.

"I shall be gone very soon," Boroffsky was saying, "and should be very sorry to leave a wrong impression behind me. I don't want to seem better than I am; and who can say what is better? I want you to know me as I am in reality. But whether I leave a good or a bad impression upon you, one thing you may depend upon, you will never meet with another man who understands and values you as much as I do."

The rustle of the leaves prevented Dmitry from hearing Nadia's answer. She must have spoken in a half-whisper; but, to judge from the excitement which it provoked on Boroffsky's face, it could not have been very pleasant.

"No, I am not the cold and calculating man you fancy," he cried, "but I belong to those—as you do yourself—to whom eagle wings were granted, in order to soar on high, to whom our daily horizon is too small. Therefore we belong to the same family, therefore——"

He did not go on. Dmitry was standing before him. They greeted each other coldly, and Boroffsky was unable to hide the dissatisfied, almost hostile, expression of his face.

"You have turned sister of mercy, I hear," he said ; "you are vying with Dr. Findeisen in your care of the sick in the village. I only fear you won't find the peasants as grateful as you expect."

Dmitry turned a deaf ear to this observation, and addressing Nadia, put different questions to her. His voice was slightly trembling.

"I have just been communicating my nomination as attorney-general at O—— to Nadeshda Sergetevna," continued Boroffsky, quite calmly.

"Are you leaving directly?"

"About the middle of August, I think. But before winding up my affairs here, I should like to give you a bit of useful advice, Dmitry Alexandrovitch : be on your guard ; your neighbourhood is not quiet."

"Indeed?" said Dmitry coldly.

"I only tell you what I know most positively. The peasants clamour for a new distribution of the soil. On the estate of the marshal of noblesse, at Die-

vitch Slovoda, there have been riotings, the ispravnik was sent for, and old Berendicreff behaved most correctly. Proclamations were found; the volost elder sent in whole lots of pamphlets. Ukhoff asked us for a gendarme of our detachment. They are much more resolute than all our magistrates, especially poor Konevetsky. You ought also to have one down here; the colonel would be delighted."

"Thank you very much," answered Dmitry scoffingly; "why not two regiments at once?"

"As you like. I only warn you that you have a whole nest full of these fellows here. But I must be off. I have some business to transact in town."

He got up and took his leave.

"And you really think of marrying this man, Nadia!" exclaimed Dmitry, as soon as he had disappeared.

She did not trust her own ears on hearing these words.

"It ought to be quite indifferent to you whom I marry," she answered aghast.

"Stop!" he cried hotly, "those evasive answers are unworthy of you, who are such a staunch supporter of truth. Besides, they won't do with me; you understand me very well. You say, with what right do I, a stranger to you, a man devoid of all your sympathies, dare to try and influence your free choice? The fact of my being your cousin does not grant me this right, certainly, but I am older than you, and have a great

deal of experience; besides, I am not such an enemy of yours, Nadia, that I should want to see you entrust the whole happiness of your young life to a man who is not worth your little finger."

Nadia had of late entirely given up the hostile tone which she used formerly towards Dmitry. Even these words did not rouse her wrath. It may be that their sweet and tender tones robbed them of their harshness.

"Do not trouble about me. I did not plight my faith to Boroffsky, from the simple reason that he did not ask me to do it," she answered simply.

They were walking down into the hollow, hardly knowing what they did.

"Well, it will happen, some day or the other, and, then it will be too late to open your eyes. Don't be angry with me. You are too clever not to see what sort of a man this Boroffsky is. But exactly because you understand him, you might allow yourself to be carried away by the resemblance which seems to exist between your upright, honourable enthusiasm and those sophisms which he is so fond of displaying."

They had crossed the small bridge, and were now turning into the wood. Since Dmitry had been here, half an hour before, a marvellous change had taken place in it. It seemed turned into a desert; the buzzing of the bees and the flapping of their wings over the field flowers, had entirely ceased. A deep,

death-like stillness reigned everywhere. The clouds had invaded the whole sky, and the wood was getting darker and darker, but neither Nadia nor Dmitry observed that a thunderstorm was quickly advancing.

"A resemblance between him and me!" repeated Nadia; "oh, what nonsense!"

"The worse for you, then, if you do not see it. Why, Boroffsky is the living incarnation of those views that were instilled into you like gospel truth, and which you, forgive me, have entirely appropriated. The road which you have been led on does not lead to a pure disinterested love of our neighbours, such as you dream of, but to the cold egotism of a Boroffsky. He persecutes his own partisans because they are still in the minority, and a Boroffsky will always be found on the side of the majority. He serves Government as long as he hopes thus to reach honour; he will leave it as soon as it is of no more use to him. And do not your friends proceed exactly in the same way? Either they follow blindly a strange leader, or they choose this road as being the only one open to them. Their motto is to sanctify themselves personally, but they consider it a most ridiculous weakness to respect the lives and property of other people. Does Boroffsky not talk in the same way?"

Nadia listened silently, unable to find a suitable answer. It was the first time she met a man who refused in such a straightforward, quiet way to bow down before her idols; and, strange to say, she did

not feel angry now with what would have seemed a real profanation to her formerly. Idols are very often only worshipped because no one tries to overthrow them. If a hand is suddenly raised against them, not a single voice is lifted up in their behalf. He talked long and passionately, assuring the young girl that it was a delusion of hers to fancy she belonged to that party which wants to erase out of human life all that does not agree with cold ciphers, and to which animal instinct does not grant the key.

"The feeling which has ruled your life since your very childhood—and I know something of your past—is the truest, purest love to your suffering neighbours. What has this feeling in common with those principles that proclaim murder and fire as lawful means of proceeding? You believed in those people because some of them suffer and hunger, and you never saw any other sort of sufferings; but, believe me, the bond between you and them has been severed long ago, though you do not know it."

"Don't know it!" she cried passionately, "when they did all they could to get rid of me! Oh, how they made me suffer!"

"Then abandon this way, once for all; break openly with these former friends, discard them for ever. How many would do it if they were not kept back by fear? but you don't know fear, I think."

She shook her head, then answered in an undertone,—

"You can't fancy what it is to leave people who are pursued, who suffer on account of their independence of thoughts."

"Independence! Oh, my dear child, these people independent! What ought to be dearer to us than the independence of our minds and faith? But they sacrifice this and many things beside to self-made idols; they carefully extirpate all independence of views and actions in their adherents. Life has been subjected by them to the most severe discipline; not only thoughts, even feelings, are forced into a certain mould with them. They have changed gaiety into an enforced seriousness, have mutilated love, and only left science untouched. But what sort of science? They want you to surrender unconditionally to a certain confession of faith invented long ago by Bokl, Moleschott, or I don't know whom, whose works they never read; and if you don't, you are mercilessly condemned. Do you call this freedom? They simply shut Russian youths up into monasteries, and force them to put on the monk's habit. Am I right?"

She did not answer. They walked on in silence.

"You won't confess this to me," Dmitry resumed, "because you see in me, if not a personal enemy, at least somebody who is hostile to your favourite convictions. Is it not so, Nadia, or am I wrong?"

She shook her head, as if unable to express in words all the thoughts that crowded within her brain. Dmitry was struck with the pallor of her face.

"What's the matter, Nadia?" he cried. "Do you feel tired? You never are."

She shuddered and suddenly caught hold of his arm.

"You are shivering all over, and your hands are burning hot. Let us try and get home as quickly as possible; it is awful to be so far away."

He had hardly finished talking before a whirlwind shook the forest, carrying along with it whole columns of dust from the high road, and twirling round broken twigs and leaves in a mad dance.

"A thunderstorm! Why did I take you here?" he cried, hurrying her onwards.

All groaned and heaved around them. Wild roarings were audible in the tops of the trees; for a moment all seemed dark; the wind had closed their eyes.

But this only lasted a minute. The forest grew quiet again, only here and there a broken branch fell heavily to the ground.

"It will be an awful tempest, and we are at least two versts from home," said Dmitry, gazing at the darkening wood.

Above their heads a white, bluish flash ran along the clouds; at the same moment a strange crash resounded, as if a window pane had been broken close to them. On the skirt of the wood the wind had again begun to moan. For a few moments it seemed as if it was not coming on, fearing to wrestle

with the mighty oaks; then dry, sharp rollings followed, the voice of the storm rose higher and higher, and folded the trembling wood in a tight embrace. Heavy raindrops were beginning to fall slowly and haltingly, when suddenly a dark cloud poured its contents over the wood, overflowing all. To the wild moanings of the wind and the heavy rolling of the thunder was now added the sharp splashing of the rain on the leaves. Nadia leant more and more heavily on Dmitry's arm, almost unconsciously surrendering to his assistance. He hurried on quickly and silently; to him the wood seemed endless, and he felt as if imprisoned in its impervious walls and unable to save her from some unavoidable danger. The rain lashed their faces and the storm broke the branches over their heads.

"You will catch cold, and it will be my fault," he kept on repeating, pressing her hand, while an odd feeling of responsibility crept over him, as if she had been entrusted to him, and he had not fulfilled his duty towards her.

In the meantime Nadia followed him unconsciously, the fever burning in her veins; but an enraptured feeling filled her breast, for this detested man had conquered her, and obliged her to bow down submissively before his higher and stronger will.

END OF VOL. I.

